

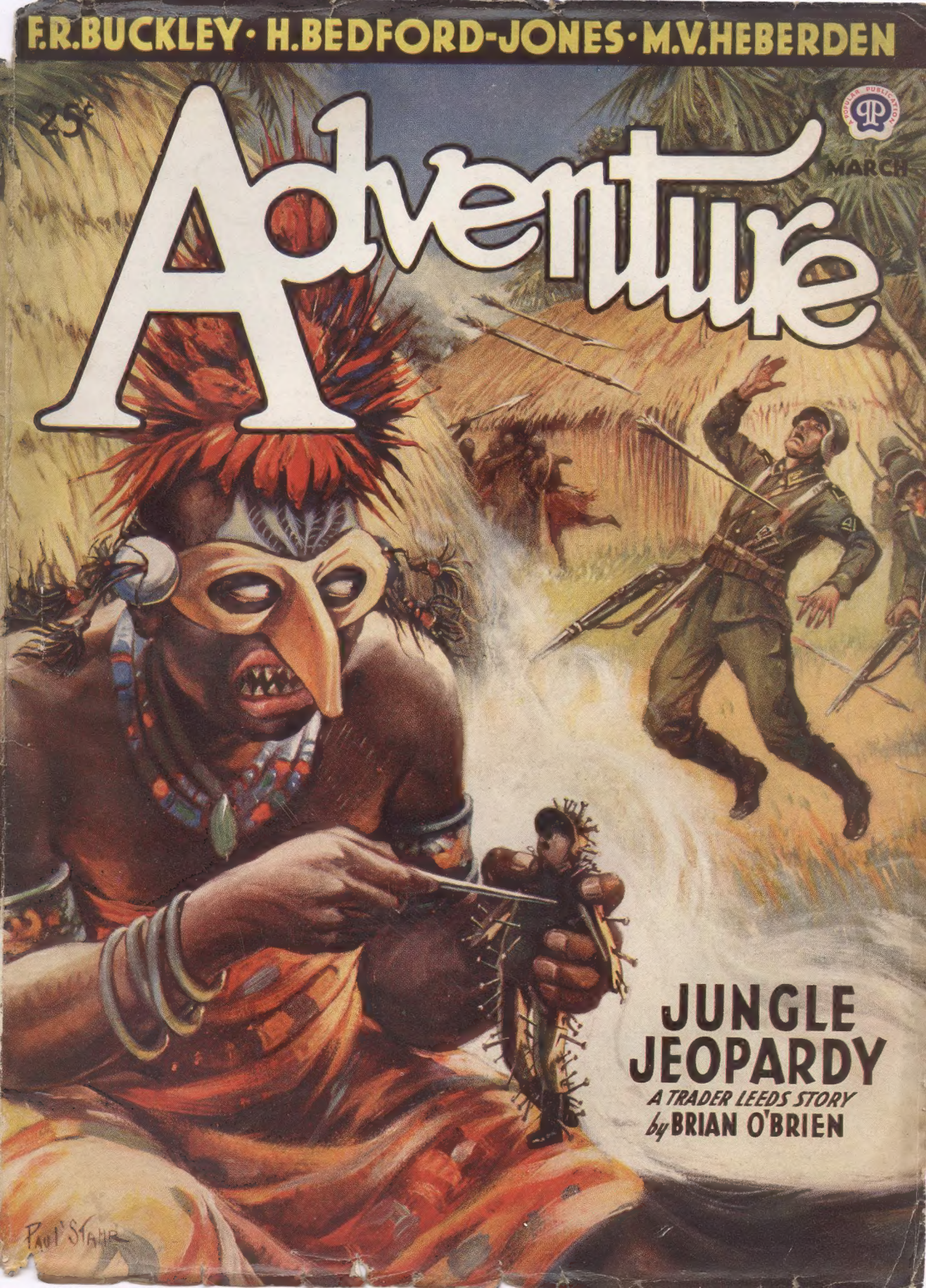
F.R. BUCKLEY · H. BEDFORD-JONES · M.V. HEBERDEN

25¢



MARCH

Adventure



JUNGLE JEOPARDY

A TRADER LEADS STORY
by BRIAN O'BRIEN

PAUL STAHRE

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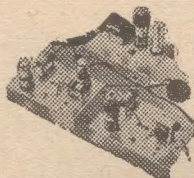
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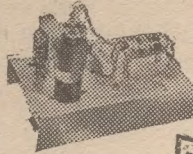
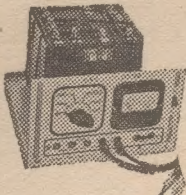
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Adventure

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Vol. 110, No. 5

for
March, 1944

Best of New Stories

NOVELETTES

Sweetwater Pirate R. A. EMBERG 10

Anton Louis Marie Demarest, man without a country, man without a king, had been a thorn in the sides of lesser rogues over half the surface of the globe. It was not till he forsook salt sea to freeboot on the freshwater oceans of the Northland that he met the man—a Down East trading-schooner captain out of Bath—whose wits and blade were sharper than his own.

Jungle Jeopardy BRIAN O'BRIEN 52

“—and that’s how Charlie Leeds won the war,” remarked Hope, the missionary, who knew when to sing a psalm and when to keep mum. Of course it was to the 1914-’18 fracas he was referring, but the gin-swizzling little cockney trader is still lord of the jungle from Gabon to Ebolowa, and just as tough on Huns today as when he first took over the territory and elected himself King of the Bulus.

SHORT STORIES

It Had to Be Fog STANLEY C. VICKERS 37

On the Eastern Front the weather can be a more bitter foe than any troops the enemy can muster—or contrawise, a better ally in launching an attack than an army of fresh reserves. So old Rhukov, who had forgotten more about weather than most men ever know, felt the least he could do for the major was give him a fog when he asked for it.

Nazis Is Mugs JONATHAN FETTES 45

The *Semerang* ought to have had an escort, or have been in convoy, at least. But in war time you take what you get. We got Doolittle, who didn’t look no more like a quartermaster than a pimple looks like the Rock of Gibraltar, but by the end of the voyage we wouldn’t have traded him for six destroyers with a battlewagon thrown in.

IF YOUR COPY OF THIS MAGAZINE IS LATE—

We regret that, due to the difficulties of wartime transportation, your *Adventure* may sometimes be a little late in reaching you. If this should happen, your patience will be appreciated. Please do not write complaining of the delay. It occurs after the magazine leaves our offices and is caused by conditions beyond our control.

—The Publishers.

BE OUT ON MARCH 10TH



Baby from Base Point M. A. SHUMARD III 83

Ordinarily you call your C. O. "the Old Man," but we had a different nickname for ours. It wasn't till the Japs took us prisoner that anyone found out he knew what we called him. But then the Skibbies learned something that day, too, so the score was even all around.

A Heel in the Moon H. BEDFORD-JONES 140

Prisoners and plunder and glory—that was the *capitán's* plan. Job Pearse listened and spat in disgust. It was not his notion of war; but then it was not his war, either. All he was interested in was his Betsy's pouch and a powder horn—and a heel in the moon.

THE SERIAL

Traitor Unknown (2nd of 3 parts) M. V. HEBERDEN 98

"Organizations are just like engines. They run for so long, then you have to take them apart and clean them." It sounded simple the way Major Brandon of Intelligence phrased it, but when the engine is the French Underground and the Gestapo is throwing sand in the gear box the renovation job becomes a little more complicated. Particularly when Allied military plans depend on getting every cog and wheel functioning perfectly again in nine short days.

THE FACT STORY

Watch Below F. E. BUCKLEY 90

The third engineer has the next watch—eight to midnight—and you're going to stand it with him. Down in the bowels of a ship in convoy, with nothing but a fraction of an inch of steel between you and thirteen tons of scalding water—and depth charges hammering at the walls that keep the sea outside.

VERSE

Fourth Generation FLORENCE BURRILL JACOBS 88

*Neat and trim from the plane and saw,
The last McGregors are off to war.*

DEPARTMENTS

The Camp-Fire Where readers, writers and adventurers meet 6
Ask Adventure Information you can't get elsewhere 152
Ask Adventure Experts The men who furnish it 153
Lost Trails Where old paths cross 157
The Trail Ahead News of next month's issue 160

*Cover painted for Adventure by Paul Stahr
Kenneth S. White, Editor*

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THE CAMP-FIRE

*Where readers, writers and
adventurers meet*

IT'S a seagoing session this month, both salt and sweetwater, so toss your oilskins on a handy bunk and step up to the galley stove and thaw out.

R. A. Emberg, who hasn't been with us since "The Phantom Caravel" appeared last June, appends the following notations on his tale in this issue. Both yarns are segments from his forthcoming book, "Sweetwater Ships and Men," additional chapters of which we plan to publish here in the next few months. He writes:

Demarest actually captured a British schooner in Lake Erie, he actually ran the British forts at Malden and Detroit, sailed his capture to Sault Ste. Marie and by the use of forged credentials persuaded the British garrison there to portage the ship into Lake Superior, after which in the spring of 1814 he looted a Northwest Fur Company flotilla. He sailed the vessel to what is now St. Louis Bay at the western extremity of the lake, scuttled her and took his loot to New Orleans via Traverse Aux Sioux and the Mississippi. There he spent the proceeds in a wild round of gambling and drinking among the Creoles, many of whom he knew, and when it was all gone, he shipped on an American privateer as a sailing master. The privateer was captured by a British man-o'-war in the West Indies and Demarest was sent to Dartmoor Prison in England where he died a year later of pneumonia. The naval engagement in Lake Superior may not be entirely fictitious. Both the Americans and the British put armed vessels on that lake late in 1813 or early in 1814. We know the names of two of the British ships, namely, *The Discovery* and *The Nancy*. And in the naval archives at Washington there is mention of a large armed schooner (unnamed) that was launched somewhere along the Keweenaw Peninsula in the early spring of 1814. In my story, the Yankee, Nathan Weatherby, and the English girl are fictitious.

F. R. BUCKLEY hasn't forsaken the F. Italy of the Borgias for the modern Merchant Marine, though we suspect he'd



like to. We persuaded him to write another Caradosso story the day after he got ashore and it's coming up. That, just to reassure any of the swashbuckling Luigi's disciples. And now to Seaman Buckley's comments on the account of his "Watch Below"—

I feel (and I have made the point in my book "Davy Jones, I Love You", which Lippincott's will publish in the spring, with twelve illustrations by the author—Advt.) That the difficulties and dangers of going to Europe in wartime have been considerably exaggerated. Anyone who has already been approved by the FBI, who has the proper sponsors, who can convince the Government that his trip is necessary to the war effort, and who can put in six months convincing the Navy, the Coast Guard and a few other agencies that he never did anything out of line in his entire life, is entirely welcome to cross the Atlantic, provided the British authorities also approve and there is accommodation available. As for the danger of being torpedoed or bombed by aircraft—well, I wasn't; there were movements on foot (or rather, under foot) but they didn't come to anything.

I wouldn't recommend the voyage as a cure for jumpy nerves; but, except when an iron door slams or the ship's whistle lets out an unexpected blast, there's very little jumping among the men who man the ships in convoy. I've been sailing in freighters all my life, and never have I found such fine gangs as I met on these wartime crossings; naturally, they were average men, just the old run-of-the-mill, cross-section sailors, but brotherly and cheerful beyond any crews ever I knew in peacetime. As seafaring men know, it's a peacetime rule that in every ship there's somebody who would like to give some-

(Continued on page 8)

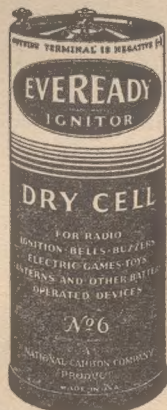
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(Continued from page 6)

body else his stripes for a necktie; but among the hundred and forty men of these two crews, I did not find one who even took a poor view of anyone else. Of course there were the usual arguments over crap-games; but no dissension, even between the deck-officers and the engineers. It was astonishing. I found myself wondering (with memories of the last war, too) whether we human individuals have got so far away from each other nowadays that the only thing we have in common is death. We're all born, but we don't remember much about that. We're all for the long jump, also; but as a rule we don't bear the fact in mind. In a trench or in a convoy ship, though, the Old Reaper is always present, the mutual and intimate friend of all of us; the universal arbitrator, as it were.

I know the standard thing, in writing about convoy crossings, is to bear down heavily on the danger—which is, of course, present twenty-four hours a day and which, if it eventuates, will do so without warning; but personally I can only say that I had a whale of a good time, going and coming; that I would like to do it again; and that if my eyesight and qualifications permitted, I would be down to sign on and sail and be paid for it, so fast that you couldn't see me for spray. The Maritime Commission is still appealing for men to man the merchant navy, so there must be a shortage; but why there should be one, I cannot understand. It's a fine life, fine food, fine quarters, fine pay; and nowadays not so much danger of being knocked off by a torpedo as there is of being run over by a bus. Besides—you don't get campaign ribbons for being in danger from traffic; and I'm childish enough rather to like those.

One other thing I should like to say: If you hear yarns about hard feeling between the merchant crews and the Navy men in the armed guard, don't believe them. I shouldn't like to express an opinion as to who inspires such stories and why; suffice it that so far as my personal experience and hearsay goes, all such stories are just plain lies.

Depending on who's got paid and who hasn't, the merchant and Navy men lend one another money; and, at sea especially, greater love hath no man than this.

I wish that (a) I didn't live within ear-shot of New York harbor or (b) that the ships would go a little easy on their whistles! Every time they blow, I hear them; and every time I hear them, I get restless!

THIS is the kind of letter we like to get. A dozen in every mail wouldn't make us anything but proud to know that the men who are out there doing the big job find time to read our magazine and check up on us occasionally.

Dear Sirs:

In "A Few Tons of Plywood" by Hugh Cave, in *Adventure* of Nov., 1943, it was mentioned that six ships were sunk in the battle of Cape Esperance, Oct. 12, '42. Now, I happen to have participated in that battle and know that one of our cruisers sunk that many herself, namely, three cruisers and three destroyers, and since I was on the only American ship which was sunk that night and would like to see the story straight, I want to say that our destroyer was given credit for sinking one Jap cruiser before being sunk herself. In all there were at least nine ships sunk and probably two more. An estimate of the Jap dead at the time was from twenty to forty thousand.

Sincerely,

—Charles Mallette, SM3/c
Naval Hospital, Ward B-3
Portsmouth, Va.

Here's what Hugh Cave wrote in reply.

Dear Mr. Mallette:

Thanks very much for your letter which *Adventure* sent along for me to answer in person.

You're right, of course, and I'm wrong. The reason I'm wrong is that it takes a little while to write a full-length book, and the story in *Adventure*, "A Few Tons of Plywood," was taken from a new book entitled "Long Were the Nights: The Saga of PT Squadron X in the Solomons."

What I'm getting at, or trying to, is that facts and figures as released for publication have an unhappy habit of changing from time to time, and authors are thereby saddened beyond belief. At the time "Long Were the Nights" was written and sent through censorship, the official figures for the Battle of Cape Esperance—figures for Jap losses, I mean—were given as 1 cruiser, 4 destroyers, 1 transport. (You can look 'em up in the official communiques, or in *Life* or *Time*.)

Now, of course, we know a little more about that engagement. We know officially that the *Boise* was there, and the *Helena* and the *Salt Lake City*. Unofficially we may know more but as yet we can't say so.

You claim that 6 and probably 9 Jap ships were sunk that night. I wouldn't

(Continued on page 151)

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SWEETWATER PIRATE

By R. A. EMBERG

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON GRANT

SOME men are born to be thorns in the sides of other men, to live perilously, and by a combination of luck and lack of scruples to achieve whatever they set out to do. Anton Louis Marie

Demarest, man without a country, man without a king, was one of these. Perhaps there is a predestined plan which such men can but follow, being themselves the tools of Providence, for most of those whom



Weatherby saw the shot strike the brig, peppering her between rail and waterline. Then a cloud of dense smoke shut her out.



Demarest had frustrated over half the surface of the globe were smug, small-souled and little men.

There was the lean and stingy Alexander McTavish, lord of the Nor'westers at Fort William, whom Demarest robbed of his light-o'-love, the Cree girl, Marie. Little use had Marie for the wrinkled Scotsman after the dashing Demarest had told her of the delights of Montreal and Quebec. And little McTavish could do about it. Demarest's swift voyageurs were half-way to the Sault before McTavish could organize a pursuit. Demarest had left the Scot tied hand and foot to his own great carved bedstead. And in after years Demarest was to bring to the lord of the Northwest the greatest humiliation a man like McTavish could suffer.

There were others, among them certain gentlemen in the military and naval forces of George III, also a Frenchman in the navy of the Blackamoor Kingdom of Haiti, and even Jean Lafitte's sailing master in the Louisiana bayous.

But there was one, a New Englander, the captain of a Bath trading schooner, who was anything but petty and a man by every test. . . .



IT was ten o'clock of a spring evening and Demarest, cloaked and hooded like a friar, with a brace of silver-mounted pistols thrust under his sash, had turned into Place d'Uville in the city of Montreal for a breath of fresh air. His rooms, stuffy as they were, were clean compared to the reek from the harbor at the foot of Lake Louis. There were several frigates and a ship-of-the-line in the roadstead and Demarest's nostrils caught the stench of dirty bilges, of scurvy-ridden quarters, of maggoty salt-horse and welked-backed seamen, impressed sailors from every port in the civilized world.

There were naval patrols in the square, with ships' lanterns, poking into doorways and taverns, searching for someone or something. Demarest decided to return to his rooms. While certain that his presence in Montreal was unknown to the authorities, he had no desire to meet some former shipmate who might recognize him. Suddenly he was almost bowled off his feet by a man with wet clothes who seemed to

be in a hurry. Demarest had no liking for rudeness nor liberties with his person.

"Lubber," he snapped, "why not look where you go?"

The man hesitated, mumbled something in English and started away. In the dim light Demarest saw that he wore the uniform of a British naval tar. But his voice was something else, the nasal twang of Maine.

"Not so fast, my friend," he called. "What is an American doing in the King's uniform at this time of night in Montreal?"

The stranger halted; Demarest could sense him crouch for a spring.

"Don't," he warned goodnaturedly, now that he knew the man's nationality, "the patrols might hear. You have nothing to fear from me. I'm just curious."

"I am a seaman from the frigate *Dundee*," the sailor whispered, trying to conceal his Yankee dialect. "Now, sir—"

"Hmm, on liberty?" Demarest was genial. "And I suppose those patrols are looking for somebody else?"

The man glanced hastily toward the far end of the square where a squad of marines had just gone into a tavern. "Good God, sir, no!" He made a clean breast of it. "I was forced into the British naval service two years ago. I have escaped—deserted today. I thought to make my way back to the United States. You—you are not an Englishman?"

Demarest shook his head. "Suppose we go to my rooms," he said. "I'd like to talk to you. Furthermore, you'll be off the streets and in less danger of being picked up."

"You—you're not—"

"No," Demarest reassured him. "If I wanted to give you up I'd have only to call."

The sailor was wet—he'd swum a quarter of a mile from the frigate—and Demarest offered him a chair before a crackling birch fire and a noggin of rum to drive away the chill.

"I used to drink brandy," Demarest smiled, "but of late years I prefer rum. Got accustomed to it in the Gulf and the Caribbean."

The Yankee gulped the drink; his host refilled the glass and eyed his guest. The American was about thirty, a year or so

younger than Demarest, a well-put-up man with weathered yellow hair and blue eyes, as blond as Demarest was dark. Nor did the baggy uniform, sopping wet, conceal the lithe, pantherish grace that rippled and flowed with every movement of limb and body.



PUTTING the bottle on the table between them, Demarest settled himself where he could look the man over. He already had ideas about the New Englander. It was his way to use men.

"An American," he mused, "and a deserter from His Majesty's Navy. You don't talk like a common seaman."

"I was the master of my own ship, the *Priscilla* of Bath," the man returned, reaching for the rum bottle. "The British make little distinction. Cabin-boy or captain. All grist to George's mills when his men-o'-war need hands."

"You bear ill-will to Britain then?"

"Aye"—bitterly—"till the day I die I shall hate England and everything she stands for!"

Demarest whistled softly. Here was clay to mold. "I, too, hate England," he purred. "I was in New Orleans when war was declared and I had considered offering my services to the American Government. But on second thought I decided to come to Montreal, for in Canada I cannot only hurt England but advance my own fortunes most in the process. Fate, my friend, has thrown your course across mine. With everything in readiness for some time, I have been held up for lack of one competent seaman. You can consider yourself signed on, Captain—er, by the way, you haven't told me your name."

"Nathan Weatherby is my name; but what if I don't want to ship with you? I want to return to the United States!"

Demarest had lied, a frequent failing, when he had said that lack of one good seaman was delaying the execution of his plans. True, he could use one, but it was not that alone. It was also the desire to interfere in the plans of other men, to frustrate somebody, this man too, even though already he had begun to like this nasal-voiced Yankee. The American wanted to go home; Demarest would thwart that desire.

He waved a hand airily and hitched a silver-mounted pistol forward. "If you won't sign on," he smiled, "we'll take a walk down to the harbor-provost. He'd be grateful to me if I surrendered a deserter!"

Demarest had not counted on his man. Weatherby's grandfather had been a flag-lieutenant under John Paul Jones and the Yankee had all of the old man's stubbornness. His jaw jutted out and his blue eyes slitted. No, Demarest would not take him to the harbor-provost despite the pistol. The muscles of his arms bunched. He was debating the chance of a sudden spring at Demarest's throat.

"I'll let daylight through you if you try it!" Demarest loosened the pistol, then changing his tactics, he added, "Suppose we talk sense! Your country is at war with England. With me you can do America a great service—and at the same time turn a pretty penny for yourself. What would you say to two years service with me—and at the end, share in—well, perhaps a hundred thousand pounds?"

Weatherby relaxed, but he was not yet convinced.

"You might tell me who you are," he countered.

Demarest got to his feet and swept him a formal bow. He was vain about the effect of his name on people. "Anton Louis Marie Demarest at your service, Captain Weatherby!"

It was now Weatherby's turn to whistle. "Demarest!" he repeated. "You don't mean—"

Again Demarest bowed. He was pleased that Weatherby had recognized the name. "Aye, one-time navigator for Jean Lafitte and commodore of the Haitian Navy."

"I've heard all about you," the American said. "Who hasn't? And this service, what is it?"

Demarest filled the glasses. "Well, I'm not exactly telling yet," he said, "but I'll go this far: I have a crew of twenty-five men here in Montreal—*couriers-des-bois*—fighters every one of them. They'd as soon cut a throat as drink a noggin of rum. They know all about small craft, canoes and *bateaux*, but nothing about large vessels. I need a man who can sail a ship—and who is big enough and has guts enough to pound seamanship into my voyageurs. It'll take a man to do

that, Weatherby. You look as though you might be the one. Now as to the lay, look!"



ON the table was a chart that Demarest had been working on that evening, a chart of the Great Lakes drawn by his own hand years before when he had been in the service of the Nor'westers. He weighted down the corners with the rum bottle and the glasses. With a pencil he traced the basins of the three lower lakes. "Wilderness," he said, "with the exception of the lands about Lakes Ontario and Erie. Both Britain and the United States have their eyes on these sweetwater seas. Right now the British are building warships at Detroit and Fort Malden. Those places are here"—he dotted two spots at the western end of Lake Erie—"and here"—he indicated a spot on the south shore—"is Presque Isle where the Americans are doing the same thing. There will be plenty of naval action on the lakes this summer, and while the cats are busy with each other, the mice, who will be us, are going to do some nibbling. From Montreal, we'll go up the St. Lawrence and across Lake Ontario in canoes. We'll portage the Niagara peninsula and come out on Lake Erie. Circumstances there will determine whether or not we re-embark in canoes. In any event"—the pencil followed through the entire chain of lakes to a spot on the north shore of Lake Superior—"here is our destination."

Weatherby shook his head. "I know nothing of the country," he said, "and it might be a voyage to the moon so far as I'm concerned. I've heard but little of these inland seas."

Demarest smiled. "I spent three years in the Superior country with the Nor'westers. I left—well, because a Cree girl, really a pretty little thing, had a desire to see Montreal and Quebec. I saw to it that her desires were fulfilled."

Even such a mild boast didn't set very well with the Yankee. He flashed Demarest a curt glance. Delighted, Demarest continued, obviously to irritate Weatherby. "What else could a man do? She was too good for her husband, a dour Scot, whose only idea of a gown was a piece of calico—and perhaps a string of beads!"

"You were an officer in the British Navy at one time?" Weatherby interrupted. He wanted to hear no more of Demarest's love affairs, but the man who had stolen one of the wives of the great lord of the Kaministiquia was not to be rebuffed.

"Yes," he persisted, "born of French parents here in Montreal, admitted to the British Navy as a midshipman when I was sixteen, kicked out three years later because of an affair with my captain's wife at St. John. Took up with the Nor'westers until I met Marie. Later on, Jean Lafitte and the Haitian Navy. There were always women who fell in love with me, Weatherby, and I, who might have become a power in the world—"

"Will there be women on this voyage?" the American asked.

Demarest shook his head. "Not that I know of, my straightlaced friend, but one can never tell. However, you won't have to fret. I'll see to that."

"The hundred thousand pounds?" Weatherby asked. "Where in that wild region do you expect to pick up a hundred thousand pounds? What is it, gems or precious metals? You mentioned a ship at the beginning, but now you talk of canoes."

"In good time, my lad, I'll tell you. After all, I met you within the hour. A hundred thousand pounds more or less. We'll hit England where it hurts, the pocketbooks of her stingiest subjects. And who knows, perhaps we'll plant the American flag north of the Great Lakes!"

Less than an hour had Weatherby known this magnetic French-Canadian; he violently disapproved of Demarest's boasting, yet he felt himself strangely drawn toward the man. He had already made up his mind. He would go with him on this strange voyage. Not for the personal gain, the share in a hundred thousand pounds, but because it offered opportunity to hurt Great Britain.

"Well?" Demarest asked.

Weatherby held out a hand. "I'll go," he said.

"Good. Let's drink to it." Demarest filled the glasses. "A hundred thousand pounds!" he toasted.

"And confusion to King George!" Weatherby shouted.

An hour later, comfortably befuddled

with Jamaica, the two men stripped down for bed. Demarest noticed that his recruit's back was crisscrossed with scars, some old cicatrices, others scarcely healed.

"The cat is the British way of making a man toe the mark," he answered shortly when Demarest asked him why he had been flogged. "I refused duty during an engagement with an American frigate off Cape Breton Island."

CHAPTER II

HOSTAGE ABOARD THE HAWK



DEMAREST had told Weatherby that they would go into the Superior country by way of the St. Lawrence and the lower lakes. Such had not been his original intention, nor had the thought of using a ship ever entered his mind. For one reason, Demarest had no ship, and with all vessels being commandeered for naval purposes on the upper lakes it was very unlikely that he would be able to purchase one. He had really planned on us-

ing the old route of the voyageurs, up the Ottawa from Montreal, over the portage and down French River into Lake Huron. This was the way for any man in his senses, particularly when Lakes Ontario and Erie were being cruised from end to end by American and British men-o'-war. But Demarest had never had such a thing as common sense, and the more he thought of what he had told Weatherby, the more its boldness appealed to him. And thus, toward sunset a month after that evening in Montreal, three open-water canoes crept over the western end of Lake Ontario toward the British stronghold of Fort George.

It had been a month of work, swift current to buck and hard portages, but the voyageurs were accustomed to it, and there had been little trouble. Demarest had quickly and without reason, so far as Weatherby could see, picked a quarrel with his chief voyageur, Louis Quintell, a day or so out of Montreal at Lachine Rapids. Quintell, mildly insubordinate, drew a knife on his commander, but Demarest took it away from him with a light-

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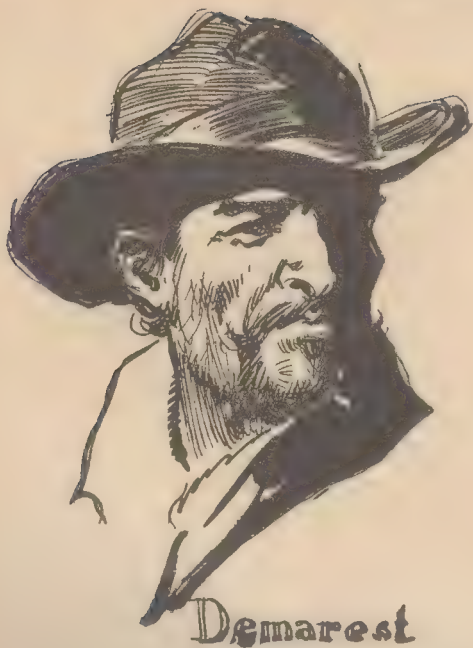


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ning counter-attack and thrashed Quintell within an inch of his life with the hilt. The man could not use a paddle for a fortnight. As the voyage up-river continued, Weatherby sensed that the quarrel and punishment had been deliberately provoked in order to let the men know at the outset who was to be captain—another trait of Demarest with which the Yankee wasn't in sympathy.

In the upper St. Lawrence a sharp lookout was kept for the patrol craft of both England and America. More and more during the spring of 1813 the lakes and the great river were becoming critical war theaters. Twice the flotilla was fired on from the American side, and in the Thousand Islands only the superb skill of the voyageurs took the canoes out of reach of a swift American sloop.

The approach of the flotilla had been noted; as the leading canoe rammed its nose into the beach, a detachment of armed redcoats were on hand to greet it. Demarest had creditable documents and a story ready.

"My name is de Martin, sir," he jovially told the subaltern in charge of the troops. "I am a Quebec merchant (there was one of that name in Quebec). I recruited these"—with a wave of his hand at the voyageurs—"to do my bit for the King.

We're on our way to join the militia at Fort Malden."

The subaltern did not doubt the story. Many volunteers had answered the call, and most of them were headed west. He inspected the canoes and their occupants. "Very good, sir. You'll report to the commandant—as a matter of form?"

"Certainly," Demarest answered. "I'll want help in getting our canoes across to Lake Erie."

The voyageurs went into camp under the parapet while Demarest paid his respects to the commandant. With pipes and rum, they talked far into the night. Demarest could be very entertaining, very agreeable, and the commandant was a courteous gentleman, very much bored with his command. He readily agreed to furnish an escort of twenty men to help portage the peninsula. His great regret was that the King had so few patriotic French sons like Demarest (or de Martin).

Two days later Demarest and his voyageurs were on the shore of another sweet-water sea, the Lake of the Eries, and guests of the British garrison at Fort Erie. Over to the south was the village of Buffalo, in American hands, with much activity going on as Demarest could see through his telescope. At Fort Erie he repeated his story and showed his credentials, now reinforced by a letter from the Fort George commandant. The Fort Erie commander remonstrated, however, when Demarest proposed going on to Fort Malden by canoe.

"We're expecting a supply vessel from Detroit in a few days. You could go back with her. It's a long paddle, Mr. de Martin, three hundred miles."

"If you were specific about the ship," Demarest replied, "I'd wait. But you don't know for sure when she'll arrive. I want to get there before the war's over."

The colonel laughed. "I wish we were all so confident! What with the Americans building men-o'-war at Black Rock and Presque Isle, we'll be hard put to hold the lakes unless the Admiralty wakes up—and that soon. Go ahead if you are impatient, but watch out for the Americans. They have some swift cruisers along the south shore."

The flotilla pointed west the next day.



IT WAS off Long Point a day after leaving Fort Erie. The sun was low on the horizon and Demarest had given the word to head shoreward, to land and camp for the night.

It was Weatherby, good sailor, who saw the topsail bearing down from the west. "Sail-ho!" he cried. The canoes backed water and Demarest looked at the ship through his long brass telescope. "Schooner," he told Weatherby, "a three-master. She might be an American, but she's probably British or she wouldn't be this far north. But British or American, she's ours—our new transport!"

Weatherby stared at him. "Three canoes, twenty-seven men! You mean to board her?"

"Aye, unless she's too heavily manned!" He shouted orders in French and the voyageurs unshipped their long rifles, looked to the priming, loosened sheath knives.

They could see the vessel now hulled against the sun. She was armed or those gunports meant nothing. "Different circumstances warrant different tactics," Demarest muttered.

Weatherby was sullen. "I'm warning you," he said suddenly, "I didn't take the cat on the *Dundee* to renege up here on these freshwater seas. If that ship is an American and you try to capture her—well—" There was the growl of a bear in his throat.

Demarest handed him the glass. "Look!" Weatherby focused it and found the schooner. Her poop was not visible because of the cloud of sail, but he saw what Demarest had seen—the British ensign at the peak.

"Feel better?" Demarest grinned.

"Yes. Pipe your boarders and give me a cutlass."

"Not yet. There are many ways to kill a cat."

The flotilla waited, the canoes lifting jerkily on the short heavy swells. Demarest carried on a conversation in French with the voyageurs, instructing them in the part they were to play.

The flotilla had been sighted aboard the schooner. The ship altered its course slightly. Running a few points off the wind, she headed directly toward the bobbing canoes. Foaming up, she luffed,



and with a flapping of canvas, hove to.

"Ahoy, canoes," somebody called from her poop, "who are you?"

"Militiamen from Quebec to Fort Malden," Demarest shouted.

"Come aboard till we look you over."

"Aye," the canoes crept alongside. Demarest, followed by Weatherby scrambled up a rope ladder, and hard on their heels came the voyageurs. Demarest's first glance after dropping down on deck told him that although the vessel was armed, she had only a small crew, perhaps twenty men; it was the supply ship mentioned by the Fort Erie commandant, no doubt. On the quarterdeck he was questioned by the captain. He showed his letters and told the story of de Martin.

"Most unusual, but highly gratifying," the captain said, returning the documents. "It seems, sir, that at least a few Frenchmen are reconciled to our rule in Canada." He held out a hand. "I am Lieutenant John Dutton of the Royal Navy, and this is His Majesty's ship *Hawk* on her way to Fort Erie for supplies."

Demarest paid but little attention to Lieutenant Dutton's eulogy on reconciled Frenchmen, for his eyes were riveted on a freckled face, a pair of blue eyes (he had always been partial to blue eyes as well as black and brown), a tangle of reddish hair

and a very well put-up figure, a girl, who had come quietly from the cabin companion and stood by the helmsman. She would be about twenty-three.

"It's a long paddle, Mr. de Martin," Lieutenant Dutton was saying. "Stay aboard and return to Malden with us."

Demarest demurred, not too much, not too little, but long enough to see that everything was in readiness, that the men awaited the signal. He gave it. The lieutenant saw that something was amiss. He opened his mouth to shout a command, but Demarest's pistol was at his head, within an inch of his ear. Weatherby had the helmsman covered. The voyageurs spread out and in less time than it takes to tell, the *Hawk* had changed owners, her crew was disarmed and herded aft to the break of the poop. Demarest pulled the English ensign from the peak, wadded it into a ball and stuffed it into a pocket.

"By God, sir," the lieutenant roared, "you'll pay for this! Who are you—"

"Shut up," Demarest snapped. "You've saved us a lot of backbreak and the trouble of taking some other ship whose crew might have put up a fight, and for that I am inclined to be lenient. Get your men into those canoes. Quick, Lieutenant!"

"I'll do nothing of the kind, you—you blasted pirate! Who are you, and by what right have you seized one of His Majesty's ships?"

"Careful," Demarest warned, his face hardening, "I don't want to spill blood, but I am prepared to spill it! There," waving his pistol at Weatherby, "is a man, an American, but lately escaped from one of your frigates at Montreal, who would like only too well to salve some stripes on his back! Shall I tell him to go ahead?"



THE New Englander's handsome face was twisted into a black scowl. His eyes were fierce. His whole appearance had undergone a change at the mention of his flogging. He seemed only to wait word to begin a carnage. Britain with her seizure of merchant ships and sailormen had opened floodgates of hate that would spill over for decades.

"You'll let me take my papers—my log—my men their personal belongings?" Dutton gasped.

"Not a thing. We may need them," Demarest replied.

There was the smart of resentment, the baffled stare of frustration in Dutton's eyes. It had been so easy. Demarest and his men had come aboard to be looked over. Confident, after the manner of British naval men, Dutton had taken no precautions. Now his ship was no longer his. It would be an ill day for Demarest should he ever fall into that particular Englishman's hands. But now Demarest was cock o' the walk—and he preened himself accordingly.

Dutton spoke to the girl. "Come, Ann, it seems there is nothing else to be done."

"Wait," Demarest said, "this young lady, who is she?"

"It's none of your business, you bloody buccaneer, but she is my sister."

"Good. We need a hostage. We'll keep the young lady—"

Dutton came at Demarest with such fury that for a moment the Frenchman thought he would have to pistol him. He let him have the barrel over the head and Dutton went down like a pole-axed ox. In the waist the schooner's crew set up a cry and for a few moments there was a general melee. In the end, however, the British went over the side, carrying with them their casualties, including their unconscious captain. The girl made a frantic effort to get into the canoes, but at a word from Demarest, one of the voyageurs, Jean Lebouf, held her in a great bear grip even though she fought and scratched like a wildcat.

"You are not going to keep her!" Nathan Weatherby said. It was hardly a question, rather a statement.

"Why not?" Demarest replied. "This voyage has just begun!"

"You mean you'll keep her with us—with nobody but men—take her where we're going? Great God, sir, you yourself said we'd be gone two years. You can't do that to a woman—even an English-woman!"

"My mutton-headed friend, I don't intend to keep her that long. Look! We have the guns of three English forts to run before we're clear. This girl—the English are chivalrous where their women are concerned—may be of value in getting by those places. She won't come to any harm

and we shall put her ashore within a few weeks."

Weatherby shrugged his shoulders. "God knows I have no love for the British, not even their women. The officer of the deck used to have us up for their amusement at Halifax and St. John. Galley slaves, that's what we were, and the ladies would smile at us as we manned the gun-tackle! But it doesn't seem right to keep this girl. However, if it's only for a few weeks, I guess she can stand it."

There was a humorous glint in Demarest's eye and a sardonic smile on his lips. The Yankee was naive. "All right, Jean," he told the voyageur, "take care of her for the moment. And watch yourself, my son! I'll flay you if you so much as look cross-eyed—"

The canoes lay alongside waiting permission to shove off. Dutton had recovered his senses; he raged like a madman, and only the effort of his men prevented him from climbing back aboard the schooner.

"You're on your own," Demarest called. "Go where you please, but you'd better head for Fort Erie. They are waiting for you there."

"You can go to hell!" the lieutenant swore. "By God, you'll pay for this some day at the end of a rope!"

"*Bon voyage*," Demarest waved. Then he turned to Weatherby. "Well, Yankee, here's our ship. Can you sail her?"

"Aye, sir. Where to?"

Demarest squinted at the twilight in the west, gave him the course and with a dozen men went to the boom-tackles. There was the rattle of blocks, the creak of cordage, the flapping of canvas, the top-sails filled and the *Hawk* stood away.

Demarest made a thorough inspection of the vessel. He came to Weatherby at the helm an hour later. "We couldn't have found a better craft for our purpose," he told the American. "About a hundred tons, well-built, well-found, shot, powder and provisions aplenty. Three 24-pounder carronades to a side and a long twelve fore and aft."

Weatherby had taken the measure of the sailing qualities of the *Hawk*. "And for all that," he answered enthusiastically, "she handles like a yacht; she sails like a Gloucesterman."

CHAPTER III

THE ART OF INTRIGUE



THE *Hawk* lay concealed in an inlet at the mouth of the Maumee River for reasons: Demarest awaited a favorable wind.

He didn't know what ordnance was mounted at Detroit and Fort Malden and he would take no chances. They would run the river at night and a strong southerly was necessary. Also, he wanted to teach his voyageurs something of gunnery and seamanship, feeling that both would be needed on the long voyage that lay ahead. So while Weatherby instructed the men in the ropes, the halyards and downhauls, and how to lay aloft, Demarest drilled them at the carronades.

With paint found in the stores he had the name *Hawk* painted out and replaced with another, *L'Etoile du Nord* and thus His Majesty's supply ship became "The North Star."

The English girl, Ann Dutton, was very little in evidence. Jean Lebouf had been assigned to care for her and she remained in her cabin. Now the lass was, to use Demarest's words, right handsome, despite her freckles, and had he had time, Demarest would have sought more friendly terms with her, but, again using the Frenchman's words, plenty of time for that after a few hundred miles had been put between the ship and the British guns at the mouth of the Detroit River. Only once did she appear on deck while they were in the Maumee, and that could not have been a very satisfactory appearance, for either her or Weatherby.

Ignoring Demarest who stood on the poop, she went straight to Weatherby who was repairing some hoops on the mizzen.

"Good day, sir," she said tremulously, hesitantly.

"Good day," he grunted.

"I must talk to you, sir." She scuffed a foot. "I'll go mad if I don't get away from this ship, if I am not returned to Fort Malden. It is a week now—"

"I'm sorry," he told her, "but I can't help you."

"Have you no heart?" She wrung her hands. "These Frenchmen—Indians would be a better name—and their leader with

the devil in his black eyes! There is only you—an American—”

He stood up and faced her. “I’ve told you I can’t help you,” he said. “But you needn’t worry. You’ll be set ashore soon.”

She strode to the rail and back. “Why did you capture my brother’s vessel?” she asked. “You are not members of the American armed forces!”

“I am an American,” he stated.

“You are a bloody pirate!” she snapped.

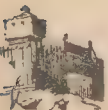
The memory of his recent captivity came to him in an angry flash.

“If I am a pirate,” he snarled, “it’s a recent occupation, and I’ll tell you why. If I hadn’t met Demarest, he might never have captured this vessel. And I’ll tell you how I met Demarest. A little over two years ago a peaceful trading ship was set upon by a man-o’-war in the North Atlantic. The countries of both ships were then at peace. One was mine, the United States of America, the other was yours, England. I was the captain of the American vessel. My ship was taken from me, and I and my crew were forced into the service of your country. For two years I was dirt under the feet of British officers, nor was that all. Look!” He tore off his jacket and bared his back. “See those scars? I’ll tell you how I got them. Because I refused to turn a gun on my own countrymen. They called it insubordination, tied me up and flogged me. Well, I escaped at last and met Demarest. You talk of pirates, lady, but have you nothing to say of British harpies, of murdering thieves and press-gangs? Now, unless you’d like to hear more, you’d better go below. I have work to do.”

Weatherby turned to his task; his whole body was heaving with anger. But after all, she was only a girl—

Suddenly he faced her again. “I’m sorry,” he said. “Of course you had nothing to do with it. I’ll talk to Captain Demarest about putting you ashore.”

“I am sorry, too,” she answered, white-faced. “I had heard of the press-gangs, but I didn’t believe. . .”



L'ETOILE DU NORD ran the river that night. Perhaps the British sentries were not on the alert—it was a dark, moonless night—for not a sound did the voyageurs

hear except the gurgle under the forefoot, the sigh of the rigging and the low whippers of Demarest as he issued commands. The carronades had been loaded and hidden and glowing matches waited to touch the priming vents in case they were fired on. But nothing happened. Demarest sighed with relief as Detroit dropped out of range.

With the wind still brisk from the south, *L'Etoile du Nord* traversed Lake St. Clair, stood into the St. Clair River and by daylight was through the swift water into Lake Huron. The first leg of the voyage in the captured schooner was over. The British forts on both sides of the straits had been run.

Demarest set the new course and then took Weatherby further into his confidence. From his wallet he extracted an official-looking document and gave it to the American.

“Read it,” he said. “We take on a new identity and I want you to familiarize yourself with it.”

Curiously, Weatherby read it. It was a letter to one Captain Louis Bonnet of Quebec, authorizing him in the name of King George to form a private expedition and proceed to Lake Superior where he was to harry and destroy the trading posts of the Astor Fur Company, or any other American companies on the south shore and at the western extremity of that lake. The document further called on Captain Charles Roberts, commandant of the British garrison at Sault Ste. Marie, to aid Captain Bonnet in attaining his objectives. The signature of Sir George Prevost, Governor-General of Canada, was affixed to the paper.

Intrigue of any sort was foreign to Weatherby. He took the document for what it appeared to be, but for that matter, almost anyone would have done the same. The government clerk at Montreal from whom Demarest had bought it had made an excellent job with both seal and signature.

Anger flared in the Yankee’s eyes, his lips tightened in a thin line. “Never,” he declared emphatically, “will I raise a hand—” He was confused. “I can’t understand. You wouldn’t have taken a British ship if—”

Demarest set him at ease. “You will.

Here's the lay. We're going into Lake Superior all right, but not to harry any American post. Quite the contrary. At Sault Ste. Marie is the last British garrison in the west. But we can't run by as we did Fort Malden and Detroit. St. Mary's River has a drop of twenty feet from Lake Superior—rapids, white water. And so? Well, we'll portage the schooner, and with the air of this letter and a little luck I think I can persuade the garrison to help do the work!"

"But won't they be on the lookout for us? Won't they know about our capturing the *Hawk*?"

"No. How many craft have we seen since leaving Fort Erie? None, except this schooner. And we've sailed five hundred miles. These lakes are not the high seas. Normally Sault Ste. Marie has little communication with the lower lakes, and now in wartime it has less. It is possible that so far this summer there has been no word from Detroit and Malden, and we're going to take a chance that none will come while we're there. The British authorities will never suspect us of bringing this vessel up here. They'll think, if they think anything at all, that we were a party of Americans, and that their captured *Hawk* is now in some port on the south shore of Lake Erie. We ran the rivers at night, we saw nobody, and so far as we know, we were unseen."

"What about the girl?" Weatherby asked suddenly. "If Sault Ste. Marie is the last British garrison, we should set her ashore there and be rid of her."

Demarest nodded. "We shall—after the portage. Once the schooner is in deep water above the rapids, she can go to the garrison—or the devil."

Weatherby heaved a sigh of relief. "I feel better. Keeping the girl aboard—well, I don't like making war on women. You won't mind if I tell her?"

"No, not at all."



LAKE HURON had been traversed, St. Joseph's Island passed, and the schooner was in the lower St. Mary's River. Not even a *bateau* had been sighted. The shores, lined with white birch and fir crept by, a primitive, virginal world. For Weatherby, the schooner might have been

on another globe so remote did the Atlantic seaboard seem.

Ann Dutton stood by the rail, a little look of anticipation on her face. Despite that clash on the Maumee she and Weatherby had been spending some time together. In fact, Demarest thought that the Yankee was just a little too attentive. Well, there was a long winter ahead and such matters could be adjusted.

Demarest stepped to her side. He pointed to a haze of blue smoke to the northwest. "There is the Sault, ma'm'selle, with a British garrison, and I assume that Mr. Weatherby has told you of our plans with regard to you?"

She nodded coldly. "He has, sir."

"And we have your word that you will do nothing to embarrass us until we are ready to clear the post? Unless such word is forthcoming, I shall be forced to lock you in your cabin."

"I give you my word, sir," she retorted. "I'll keep it, and I hope that you will do likewise."

The ship worked alongside the Nor-westers' wharf. There was a waiting crowd; the advent of a large vessel at the Sault was a novelty. In the crowd were scarlet-uniformed regulars, buck-skinned Canadians and blanketed Indians. A man on the dock caught a heaving line, breast and stern lines followed and the ship was berthed. Hat in hand, Demarest swept ashore with the bravado of a courtier of the Grand Monarch, but not before seeing to it that the English girl was under lock and key in her cabin, and Jean Lebourg in the passageway outside. Demarest might have taken a man's word, or even a woman's, but in his estimation, a few precautions were never amiss. Ten minutes after going ashore he was closeted with the acting commandant, and that individual was inspecting his papers.

Captain Charles Roberts was not at the Sault. He had gone with a detachment of soldiers and militiamen to attack the American fort at Mackinac. The time of his return would depend on the success of the expedition. Demarest had only a raw subaltern to deal with, a youngster who became enthusiastic when he read Sir George Prevost's letter. Would he help with the portage? He certainly would. Why, he'd draft enough Indians to carry

the schooner bodily around the rapids. The man who could conceive such an idea merited all the aid the military authorities could give. An armed ship on Lake Superior would reduce every American post on the south shore.

Nor did Demarest let the acting commandant forget his promise. If Roberts returned he might not be convinced so easily. And there was always the chance of a courier from Detroit or Fort Malden.

Portaging operations were started the next morning. Rollers were cut from trees, placed in position and the ship was hauled ashore. Then began a race with time, with Roberts, with a courier, with word that *L'Etoile du Nord* was not what she appeared to be. Demarest had calculated that unassisted and unopposed his own crew could have worked the ship about the rapids in three months, but with the help he now had, that time would be reduced to the same number of weeks.



FROST was in the air and the leaves were turning when *L'Etoile du Nord* was over the worst of the portage. She lay on the river bank above the rapids, just a few fathoms from smooth deep water. A day or so of kedging and she would be afloat. To Weatherby had been given the responsibility of keeping the schooner shipshape, to see to it that everything was in order, that no seams were started by the strains, and well had he done the job. In addition, the Yankee had kept Ann Dutton quiescent. Again and again, touched by the girl's despair, he had assured her that when the schooner was in deep water again she would be sent to the post, and for this assurance he had Demarest's word.

Rumors were rife at the Sault: One, that the American post at Mackinac had been captured and that Captain Roberts would return before long. Two, that American military forces were gathering for a series of blows at the British along all lake fronts. These rumors were brought in by scouts, half-breeds and Indians, and no man could say what truth there was in them.

Demarest was more than anxious at this late stage; he had misgivings, nor were they groundless. The morning the final

kedging began, an orderly came from the fort.

"The commandant's compliments, sir, and he'd like to see you at once."

Demarest called Weatherby to stand by while he questioned the soldier. "Do you know why Lieutenant Owens wants to see me?"

"No, sir, unless it has to do with dispatches just arrived from below. A canoe came at daybreak and the courier has been with the commandant ever since."

Demarest dismissed the man, telling him he would call immediately on the commandant. And to Weatherby: "We may have to abandon ship and make a dash for it. If I am not back within two hours, make a break. March due west and keep going. I'll rejoin you somewhere. There never was an English prison that could hold me, much less the calaboose here. Take council with Louis Quintell; he knows the country."

In the commandant's quarters, Demarest faced the subaltern. The lieutenant's eyes were grave, his countenance troubled.

"I can't understand it, Captain Bonnet," he said, "I'm in receipt of a communication from Fort Malden this morning. Among other things, it mentions the fact that one of our armed schooners, the *Hawk*, was captured by a band of American irregulars in Lake Erie, the commander of which passed himself off as a gentleman volunteer from Quebec. The crew was set adrift in canoes, but a lady, the sister of the *Hawk's* captain, was held captive."

Demarest looked blank.

"And isn't it strange, Captain Bonnet," the commandant continued, "that your vessel is a three-masted schooner of about a hundred tons, mounting six carronades and two long twelves, a duplicate almost of the *Hawk*? And wouldn't it be logical to think that the dispatches I have received would mention you?"

"Rather," Demarest admitted. "One might think that my vessel is the *Hawk*! I get the point. You are inclined to think that she is—and that I am the gentleman from Quebec! Well, sir, you are mistaken. Do you think that the forts at Malden and Detroit would permit any vessel to sneak past their guns, particularly after an affair such as you mention? Or that anyone,

even this gentleman from Quebec, whoever he is, would be so foolish as to come here, granting that he had run the fortifications, into a veritable cul-de-sac? I have told you the truth, sir. My mission was only undertaken after long conversations with Sir George Prevost."

The lieutenant was in a quandary. He didn't want to make a mistake, to arrest anyone who was in the favor of Sir George, and Demarest's credentials were testimony to the fact that Captain Bonnet was certainly an intimate of Sir George's. And the cruise of *L'Etoile du Nord* would necessitate much secrecy lest word reach the American posts on Lake Superior, which would account for the seeming official ignorance of the expedition. So, at least, the lieutenant rationalized when confronted with Demarest's forthright declaimer.

He swallowed hard. "You—you will have to remain here at the Sault till Captain Roberts returns."

"That's agreeable," Demarest nodded. "We'll proceed with the kedging and get the schooner afloat. Then when Captain Roberts returns we can go on. Snow will fly shortly, and if we are to reach our objectives this year there must be no undue delay."

"I don't know about the kedging," the lieutenant muttered. "I believe the vessel should stay where she is—"

"Look here, Lieutenant," Demarest protested vigorously, "just because my ship happens to be of the same rating as one captured by Americans in Lake Erie, and because dispatches have failed to mention me, you are putting yourself in a precarious situation. Sir George won't take this lightly, this setting at naught an expedition which he himself helped plan. Why don't you give the ship a thorough inspection? If you find anything to bear out this preposterous suspicion, well, I am in your power. If we had a girl aboard, where do you suppose we've kept her all these weeks?"

The lieutenant capitulated. "No, no, Captain Bonnet." He was all apologies. "I beg of you to forget everything I have said. It was just that appearances were against you. All that I ask is that you remain at the Sault until Captain Roberts comes back."

"We're safe for the time being," Demar-

est told Weatherby after his return to the ship. "But the lieutenant is troubled. I've satisfied him today, but tomorrow or the next day he'll have all his fears back again. We must get the schooner afloat immediately."

After another night and a morning, water rippled under the schooner's bow. Capstans and winches creaked. Lines groaned and her stem sank deeper. Indians, militiamen and voyageurs shouldered the strakes and manned pry-bars. Then with a sucking of mud under her bottom, *L'Etoile du Nord* slid in, the bow came up and she floated on an even keel. Ahead of her bowsprit was the greatest reservoir of fresh water in the world: the thirty-five thousand square miles of Lake Superior.

Demarest and Weatherby inspected the hull, the wells, the seams. There were a few leaks, but nothing that oakum and a caulking maul could not fix. On the topside everything was in order. Halyards were free, tackles clear. Sail could be gotten on her at any time. The carronades were loaded, fresh-primed and freed of the lashings they had worn during the portage.

"Now let anybody try to stop us!" Demarest grinned, a note of pride in his voice.

Hardly had the words left his mouth when a squad of soldiers boarded the vessel. Their commander, a corporal, posted men at the mooring lines and then came aft.

"Pardon, sir," he informed Demarest, "but it is Lieutenant Owens' orders that we are to remain aboard."

"Why?" Demarest asked.

"I don't know, sir, except that we're to see that you don't sail without permission of the commandant."

"Damn his impertinence!" Demarest barked. Then to Weatherby: "I'm going to protest, more as a matter of form. In the meantime, get ready to sail. We can handle these soldiers!"



BUT Demarest never again talked to the lieutenant. Long before he had reached the fort he noted soldiers and Indians running toward the lower river. Approaching the wharf was a flotilla of canoes and

bateaux, and in the craft were splashes of scarlet, the King's uniforms; Captain Roberts had returned.

Demarest ran up the portage. Weatherby met him as he came over the side. "All ready, sir," the Yankee reported.

"Good. Go forward and tell the corporal I want to see him. Then take the sentries. Bring them aft—and hurry. We haven't much time. Roberts is back! And if I am not mistaken, we'll be hearing from him very shortly."

Disarming the sentries was the work of a moment. Huddled on the 'tween-deck, they waited like sheep.

Demarest shouted orders. The stops had been taken off the sails and the hal-yards were on the capstans. The topsails were sheeted home. Demarest's luck was holding. Ordinarily the ship would have been warped out of the river, but now a brisk wind came from directly aft and they'd have little trouble in getting away from the shore. As the sails filled, the schooner tugged at her lines.

"Isn't there something you have forgotten?" Weatherby asked Demarest.

"If you mean the English girl, no," Demarest replied. "I'll put her ashore with the soldiers. And look, Weatherby, round up enough men to man the port carronades. I don't have to tell you what to do in case we're interfered with before we clear the river. Any attack will come from that side."

After Weatherby had gone, the soldiers were herded ashore at the point of a pistol. Louis Quintell slashed the mooring ropes with an axe. Demarest put the wheel down, *L'Etoile du Nord* moved forward, surged against the sluggish current, headed up-stream.

But not yet was the ship clear. Getting canvas up had taken time. Time enough perhaps for Lieutenant Owens to tell Captain Roberts certain things, long enough for Captain Roberts to decide on prompt steps, for before the ship had moved a cable's length toward Lake Superior, a band of men, fifty or a hundred, came running along the river bank. There was a shouting of orders, muskets and pistols cracked and a hail of bullets whipped through the schooner's sails and spat into her timbers.

Then Demarest had his last sight of

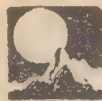
Lieutenant Owens. Red-faced, his uniform disordered, the lieutenant came abreast of the poop, leveled a pistol at Demarest and fired pointblank. The ball missed its intended target, but it cut away a wheel spoke. More soldiers appeared and the discharge of musketry increased. Slugs droned like wasps. A voyageur at the mizzen-sheets slumped, twisted and was still. There was still a mile of river between the ship and Lake Superior. Was the voyage to end before the lake had been reached? Would a few lucky shots cut the hal-yards, the rigging, make the schooner unmanageable and land the crew in the fort's brig—with a rope at the end? Not if Demarest could prevent it. He sent a sailor to Weatherby with orders to open with the carronades. Nor did he have to wait long for its execution.

One moment there had been the shoreline within pistol range, dotted with puffs of smoke from the guns of the soldiers, the next moment it had been blotted out by red flame and billows of white vapor from the guns of *L'Etoile du Nord*. The fumes of sulphur and saltpeter drifted to Demarest's nostrils on the poop. It was good to smell battle again. The schooner shivered with the recoil.

And again Weatherby gave the British a broadside. The noise of the guns, the crash of shot into the timber, while it probably did little harm, scattered the soldiers, who took cover. The vessel continued her progress toward Lake Superior with only a stray bullet now and then whipping through her top hamper. But the British would long remember Louis Bonnet—and for well over a hundred years English authorities in Canada would keep his story secret.

CHAPTER IV

KNIFE ARTIST



A COLD moon cut a path across Lake Superior. *L'Etoile du Nord* wallowed under reefed courses before a gale right down from Henry Hudson's Bay. Demarest had expected a hot pursuit by *bateaux* and canoes, but the gale put an end to such apprehensions.

He had a mutinous New Englander on

his hands. Nothing he could say would mollify Weatherby. With all the excitement, Demarest had "forgotten" to put the English girl ashore with the soldiers! Demarest had always had unaccountable streaks of absent-mindedness. Nor could Ann Dutton have walked off the vessel herself. Demarest had the key to her cabin in a jacket-pocket and he had ordered Jean Lebouf to pay no attention to any noise she might make to draw notice to her confinement.

Weatherby would not believe him. "You're a liar, Captain Demarest," he snapped, and the American's eyes were harder than chilled steel. "I believed you—took you at your word. I shall never repeat that mistake!"

Demarest shrugged his shoulders. He didn't like to be called names, but after all, what did it matter? He had really grown fond of Weatherby. Why let a woman come between them?

"Believe it or not," he repeated, "in the heat of what happened back there, I forgot the girl. And it's too late now to make amends. To beat back and set her ashore would be sticking our heads into a noose. Nor can we land her elsewhere. This country is all wilderness. There will be frigid weather within a month. There are savages and animals in the forests. And there's too much at stake, Weatherby, for you and me to quarrel. If we did,

one of us would get hurt. If it were me, my voyageurs would make hash out of you. If it were you, well, I'd be the loser. This sweetwater sea we're now on is the roughest body of water in the world. I need your seamanship."

"Again, Captain Demarest, I don't believe you. I'm not a fool, but we're returning this girl to her people at the end of this voyage. If you lay hands on her, I'll kill you!"

Weatherby was very near death at that moment. Men didn't threaten Anton Demarest often—and live to tell of it. He fingered the butt of a pistol.

"You are a fool, Weatherby, albeit a chivalrous one. You have my word, man—I'll keep my hands off her!"

"Your word is worthless!"

"Have it your way. If I can't keep my hands off, I'll give you fair warning. Now if you'll cool down I'll tell you what our destination is, what we're after, and the reason I didn't tell you all before."

"Go ahead. But don't forget for a moment what I've just told you!"

"Listen then, Yankee. It wasn't a matter of trusting you. Had we been captured, the English might have used pressure to discover what it was we were after. So I told nobody, not even my voyageurs. Now for the yarn: To the north of here is the richest fur-producing territory in the world. Indian trappers range between the



Superior country and the western prairies, delivering their pelts to the Nor'westers at Fort William, which is at the mouth of the Kam River where it flows into this lake. At that place they are sorted, graded and baled, and every spring after the ice is out, they are sent downlakes in a vast canoe and *bateaux* flotilla to Montreal. Some of these shipments are valued at a hundred thousand pounds or more. For years I have had this expedition in mind, but with the United States and England at peace there were too many difficulties. I'd have to go through American territory with my loot. The war has changed everything. America won't give a damn what we do. And that's it, my friend. Come spring we're stopping the outbound flotilla and transferring its cargo to our hold!"

"But," Weatherby asked, "how shall we return if England still controls the Sault?"

"We do not return by the Sault. We go out Traverse aux Sioux. The Mississippi and its tributaries rise in country not far from the western end of the lake. The Sioux Indians have beaten trails from the lake to the rivers. After we've lifted the pelts we'll sail to *Sieur Duluth Bay*, scuttle the ship, pack the furs overland to the *St. Croix River*, build a raft, then heigh-ho for *St. Louis* or *New Orleans*. I have friends at both places."

"Suppose, because of the war, the Nor'westers don't dispatch the spring flotilla?" Weatherby asked.

"Then we'll go to *Fort William*. We'll blow the place to pieces unless the factors are reasonable. But I know *McTavish* and I think he'll listen to reason. The North-west Company has a large investment at *Fort William* and with our carronades trained on the—"

"It's plain thievery and you can't make it anything else!"

"Sure," Demarest agreed, "and so is all privateering. I've heard that you New Englanders had no scruples about the profession in your revolution—and how many privateers do you think America has on the high seas today? And looting a North-west convoy is a blow at England. The Crown takes a cut on every pelt marketed. And how about British prestige?"

"I still don't like it. Musket to musket, gun to gun, cutlass to cutlass—but this sneaking up on a defenseless flotilla, then

running off and scuttling a good ship—"

"If it's fighting you want, well, old *McTavish* may be stubborn and you'll get a bellyful. As for me, I prefer the easier way."

"What about this winter?" Weatherby asked. "Where do we go, what do we do?"

"Lay up in a secluded harbor on the north shore, snug as bugs in a rug. Game and fuel aplenty. When the ice is out, we'll—"

Weatherby's eyes bored into Demarest's. "There's nothing else to do. But it's not so simple. Twenty-six men, all of us outside the law, with a devil for a captain—oh, I grant you, a smooth, soft-spoken devil, but a devil nevertheless! A snow-bound ship, long nights, short days—and one girl. I know what you're thinking, Demarest! If you try it, one of us will die. It may be you! You see, I am looking after *Miss Dutton*."



L'Etoile du Nord lay behind a hook of land in *Grand Marais Bay* on the desolate north shore of *Lake Superior*. Snow piled her deck high and her rigging was frosty white with ice rime. Ice four feet thick on the surface of the bay held her tight in a frigid grip.

Already the monotony of a long winter had set in, and despite Demarest's rigorous methods the voyageurs quarreled constantly over this, over that, over the tasks assigned them, the chopping of wood, the keeping of the waterhole alongside the schooner free of ice. And when French-Canadian voyageurs quarrel, they usually use knives. A half-dozen men had hard-lipped, half-healed knife wounds within a week after the ship had frozen up.

Because of the intense cold, the voyageurs had moved from the foc'sle to 'tween decks throwing up bunks against the lazarette bulkhead. And before snow and ice had covered the ground they had lugged tons of boulders aboard and erected a stone fireplace on a deep bed of sand, venting the ship's sheathing to permit the escape of smoke. And here, right against the after-quarters, heavy bass voices brawled day and night.

The members of the afterguard spent the time in their bunks in the galley where it was warm. Here, too, came *Ann Dutton*.



Holding the Yankee's knife-hand, Demarest closed in. His own knife-hand went up.

But perhaps it was because of Weatherby. Like the crew, Demarest had changed, too. Because of the weather he had no outlet for the great physical and nervous

energy that boiled within him. And hour after hour in the tiny galley he would sit and watch Ann Dutton, his eyes rarely leaving her face unless to follow the move-

ments of her dainty hands and shoulders.

But regardless of how torch-hot and hungry Demarest's eyes grew, regardless of the riotous pounding of blood through his veins, there was always the cold blue eye of Nathan Weatherby to restrain him.

Not that the Frenchman was afraid. He had boasted, and with good reason, that he feared nothing, not even God-Almighty, but this New Englander, this Maine Yankee, had promised to kill him should he give him cause. The only alternative was to kill Weatherby, which Demarest could not bring himself to do, not even for the delights he hungered for.

Yet one night Demarest lost his head. He found himself in the girl's cabin, to which he had kept the key. He took her in his embrace, felt the life of her strong body against his, heard her cry out—and then Weatherby came, growling like a bear, his fists flailing like hammers.

Demarest released the girl. A wild swing caught him in the midriff, smashing him against the bulkhead. Weatherby followed, in his hand a long-bladed sheath knife. And by this time Demarest had unsheathed his own knife.

The gasping sobs of the girl drove Weatherby insanely mad. He drove at Demarest's throat; the Frenchman parried; steel clashed on steel. Deflected, Weatherby's point sank deep into Demarest's upper arm. He could feel the hot stab, the grate of the blade on bone. Weatherby jerked the knife free and raised it for a finishing thrust, but in doing so he had left himself wide open to a knife artist, which Demarest was. Holding the Yankee's knife-hand which he had seized, Demarest pulled close. Nor could Weatherby break the grip despite the fact that he outweighed the Frenchman by fifty pounds. Demarest's own knife-hand, free, went up. Weatherby tried to shield his throat, his heart. The girl screamed. Then a strange thing happened: Instead of driving his blade into the American's throat as he could have done, in the twinkling of an eye, the Frenchman had snapped the knife into the air, caught it by the blade and struck downward with the heavy hilt. It landed fair. Weatherby crumpled.

Demarest had little thought of the girl then. It was Weatherby for whom he was

concerned. He had hit hard. . . . He dragged him along the passageway to the main cabin and his own bunk. Then he went to the galley for hot water and bandages. When he returned Ann Dutton was with Weatherby, her face deathly white in the dim light from the gimbals. Weatherby moved, opened his eyes.

"Is—is he all right?" the girl whispered.

"Yes," Demarest smiled. "He'll have a sore head for a day or two; I'll have a bad arm for a month. Leave us now—I'll want to talk to him."

"You'll hurt him—kill him!" she cried.

Demarest laughed shortly. "I'd have done that in your cabin had I the mind to. No, he'll be safe."

Weatherby's lips were moving, but speech would not come. Yet he could hear and understand. Hate blazed from his eyes.

"I won't insult your intelligence with apologies or excuses," Demarest told him. "It shouldn't happen again soon. The girl has not been harmed, only frightened. Of course, if you're not willing to let it drop I'll cut your throat now and be done with it. If you'll overlook what has happened, you might help me with this bandage."

Weatherby gazed at him in sheer amazement. "I can't understand you, Demarest," he gasped. "You are a strange man!"



IN THE morning Demarest, his arm in a sling, mustered the voyageurs on deck. "There used to be a Sioux village about twenty miles north of here," he told the men. "I'm paying it a visit and picking up some moose-meat. Who wants to go?"

The voyageurs all clamored to accompany him. He grinned and turned to Weatherby. "You stay with the ship, you and Miss Dutton. With you the girl will be safe. I shan't take either of you with me, well, because there will be squaws in the village. You are smug jacks, Weatherby, both you and the girl, and I don't think you would approve. We'll be back within a week."

"You needn't return on my account," Weatherby remarked grimly, "nor can I hope that the Indians prove friendly."

"You're not only smug, but blood-

thirsty to boot! If you'd loosen up once in a while, shed some of that New England glumness, you'd find life a lot pleasanter."

"I prefer my glumness to your way."

"Every man to his own, Weatherby."

Demarest and his men found the village. They were welcomed and there was much feasting and dancing. Better in spirits, they returned to Grand Marais Bay at the end of a week, to find an ice-bound ship, a cold galley, the cabin-table littered with charts, and the Yankee and the girl gone. Their trail lay, four or five days old, west along the north shore.

It was doubtful if the two could survive the wilderness, the weather; Weatherby was no woodsman. And Demarest could tell by the markings on the chart that they were undoubtedly heading for the Astor post at Fondulac—which had been deserted for five years. He had to bring them back or they would perish. It was now the season of blizzards.

He took half a dozen voyageurs and set out after them immediately. Once new snow filled the tracks, they were as good as dead. Three days later he found them, huddled half-frozen before a fire under a snow-canopied spruce, without food.

Demarest tucked mittened fingers under his belt and grinned. "So you thought to become babes-in-the-woods? It's lucky I set so much store by you, Weatherby! One or two more days and you would be wolf-bait. I didn't think it of you, that you'd desert. Shame on you! I suppose you're ready to return and be good. We brought extra snowshoes for you; the lady we'll put in a hammock and carry."

"Your tongue is too nimble for me to compete with," Weatherby returned sourly, "but what if we prefer going on, taking our chances?"

"Your suicides would bother me a long time," Demarest shook his head. "I can't permit it. If you are obstinate I'll have you knocked on the head, trussed up like a bale of hides and lugged back."

Winter had grown old and spring was on the march. Impatiently the crew of *L'Etoile du Nord* awaited the ice breakup. In March the winter discipline was thrust aside and regular watches reestablished. Demarest became a driving martinet. The schooner was overhauled from truck to waterline, from jib to quarterdeck. The

fireplace was dumped over the side, the smoke vent repaired and the men sent back to the foc'sle. The ordnance was burnished and the touch-holes of the pieces reamed out; the powder-run was aired and samples from each powder-cask inspected for dryness. Cutlasses and dirks were ground to razor edges. While Demarest hoped to accomplish what he had set out to do without fighting, still one could never tell about McTavish. The Scotsman would fight sometimes—if his liver wasn't functioning properly, or if his pocketbook was menaced.

April brought geese honking northward. Seagulls perched in the rigging. Great cracks appeared in the inlet ice; and the ice bounding open water far out in the lake resolved itself into great white dunes as wind and wave tore at it.

Then a south wind came and with it a warm rain that poured tons of water from the skies. One night the ice on the bay was seemingly solid, the next morning it was soft, mushy and breaking up.



THAT same evening a band of Sioux brought a white man to the ship, an American frontiersman by his speech and garb, whom they had captured that morning. What the man was doing on the north shore of Lake Superior, hundreds of miles from an American post, could not be determined at first, but under persuasion—Demarest was a master at persuasion—and after Weatherby had had a long talk with him, he softened and gave Demarest much valuable information, as well as news of what had taken place in the outside world during the preceding autumn and winter. The man was one of General Harrison's scouts.

The naval battle Demarest had predicted on the lower lakes had taken place. Commodore Oliver Perry's fleet from Presque Isle had defeated the British squadron at Put-in-Bay. Detroit had been evacuated by the British and their army under Proctor badly whipped. Extension of naval warfare to the upper lakes during the coming summer was contemplated. The Americans hoped to capture Sault Ste. Marie and even Fort William, the post of the Nor'westers. The scout had been sent to spy out the lay of the land; he had dis-

covered things that interested Demarest greatly.

The most important of these were: The British were building three smallish brigs at Point aux Pins, a few miles west of the Sault. Come spring, they would be armed and sent into Lake Superior for the double purpose of defending that lake against the Americans and hunting down and capturing a notorious French-Canadian renegade, one Anton Demarest, who had committed many crimes against the British rulers of his Canadian homeland, and who was on the loose somewhere in the vast area of Lake Superior in an armed schooner which by fraud he had stolen from the British Navy.

Demarest grinned happily and told the scout that he was Anton Demarest. He urged the man to tell him what the American plans were for Lake Superior. Well, for one thing, right after the battle of Put-in-Bay, a detachment of Harrison's soldiers and Perry's sailors, together with skilled shipwrights, had come overland from the Illinois country to the Keweenaw Peninsula on Superior's south shore, bringing with them ships' irons, canvas, cordage and guns. Somewhere on the peninsula a large schooner had been constructed, in all probability had now been launched. The scout had been ordered to report there with information gleaned at Fort William, and had been on his way by land about the western extremity of Lake Superior when picked up by the Indians.

Within ten minutes after the man had given this information, Demarest had boats over the side and the schooner was being warped out of the bay. With the ice soft he was taking no chances with either British or Americans. Their new ships might already be scouring the lake.

L'Etoile du Nord made a long leg through soft ice-floes with a pooping norwester and landed the American scout on Keweenaw Point, saving him a wearisome land trek. There was no sign of habitation at the Point, but that meant nothing. If the Americans had built a ship somewhere in the vicinity it would be down along the sheltered east shore of the peninsula, and that scout would find it as surely as a homing pigeon finds its cote. Then the jib of the schooner was pointed toward the Kam, toward Fort William.

CHAPTER V

DEMAREST EVENS A SCORE



DEMAREST had seen little of Ann Dutton after her and Weatherby's ineffectual attempt to reach Fondulac. She kept to her cabin mostly, and what time she spent on deck or ashore was always with the American. In view of Demarest's behavior, relations between him and Weatherby had improved, were almost on the old basis. As for Demarest, he could hardly credit himself with the restraint he exercised, for the sight of the girl always aroused fire in him, started the riotous pounding of blood through his veins. And not yet had he made up his mind whether he preferred her as a maid to Weatherby as a man, a comrade-in-arms. To take her after the manner of a man taking a woman, which he had intended from the first day he set eyes on her, meant that he must either kill Weatherby or maroon him.

Weatherby brought up the question when the ship raised Isle Royale.

"Are there women at Fort William?" he asked Demarest.

"Yes," Demarest answered, "most of the resident whites have squaws. Old McTavish had a half-dozen, and one or two of the white clerks had their white wives with them."

"And the fur flotilla? What will it do after we lift its cargo? Where will it go?"

"I don't know. On to the Sault, or perhaps return to Fort William."

"Then there's no reason why we can't put Ann—er, Miss Dutton aboard it. You've been decent, Captain, and I appreciate it. Now if we send her along with—"

Demarest found himself nettled, but he put on a good face. "We'll let her go," he said shortly, "good riddance. I might have made a fool of myself—"

He was still more nettled an hour later when he saw Weatherby and the girl amidships, leaning over the rail in intimate conversation. He could not see Miss Dutton's face, only the shape of her in a bulky greatcoat she had contrived from a blanket, a coat which did not completely hide her delectable contours, and a few reddish

curls peeping from underneath an equally shapeless stocking cap, but he wasn't so sure about keeping his latest promise.

For a week the schooner cruised off the eastern end of Isle Royale with not a speck to break the white-capped blue of the great lake, other than a few drifting ice-floes. Demarest was impatient. Those English brigs might appear any day, or the American schooner. Nor would the Americans be apt to let *L'Etoile du Nord* get away with a rich prize which by capture they themselves might claim.

"We're going on to the Kam, Weatherby," Demarest told the American on the dawn of the eighth day. "I'm tired of waiting. That flotilla should have—"

He didn't finish the sentence. A hail came from the man in the fore crosstrees. "Boat-ho, a whole string of them dead to north."

Demarest leveled his glass. There it was, a fleet of *bateaux* and canoes, bobbing over the swells between Pie Island and Cape Thunder, a prince's ransom in their frail hulls.

Demarest took the wheel himself, gave it a few spokes and headed toward the flotilla. For a week the schooner had been loafing, the sails spilling the wind half the time. That was behind her. Sheets were trimmed and Demarest put the ship through her paces.

The flotilla sighted the schooner, backed water, and there was some confusion among the small craft as they huddled together.

"Down the flying jib," Demarest yelled, "and stand by to back over the stays'ls!"



THE downhaul was in and fast as the schooner slipped by the boats. Demarest put the wheel up and the schooner came around to windward. He heard the rattle of gunports and knew that Louis Quintell was following instructions.

Giving the wheel to a voyageur, Demarest strode to the rail and shouted through cupped hands, "Come alongside, one at a time, and heave up your bales aboard."

A heavy Scotch burr replied, a burr that Demarest had heard before, that of Alexander McTavish, lord of the Nor'westers at Fort William. The old scoundrel was going out himself, perhaps for a new wife.

"By the blazes uv hell, who be ye to tell us what to do with our packs? 'Vast, mon, 'tis the Northwest Company's own factor ye are talkin' to!"

"And so I meet my old friend, McTavish, again," Demarest mocked. "The last time I saw you, Alex, you were in bad temper, and tied hand and foot to a bed. Remember? And how you swore to even up with me some day! Well, you old villain, we're evening up now. You see that gun?" He flicked a hand at the stern-chaser. "It's loaded and trained on you. And along the side you'll see the muzzles of others. They are loaded too, and there are men with matches at the breeches of every one. Now you'd better come alongside!"

McTavish recognized Demarest's voice. "We'll dinna such a thing, ye—ye bloody pirate!" the Scot howled. "And some day, mark me, Demarest, ye'll be doin' a fling on air fer this. Ye'll not always—"

Demarest signaled. A cloud of smoke billowed from the stern-chaser. The ball struck within a yard of McTavish's *bateau*. It threw up a geyser of water, almost swamping the boat.

"The next will be better aimed," Demarest called. "Better not risk it, Alex!"

McTavish's English changed to Gaelic, and no doubt he was uncomplimentary, but he was prudent. No man likes to leave six widows. There was a drone of conversation in the boat, then slowly it approached.

A voyageur threw it a line. "Make fast and heave up your bales—quick!" Demarest ordered.

"I'll see ye at the end of a rope fer this," the factor yelled, his face purplish with rage. "Aye, 'twas an evil hour when the company took ye into its service, ye thievin' renegade! Ye've no right to do this, Demarest, to take our winter's catch—"

"As good a right as you, my man, to take them from the Indians for a few shoddy blankets and cheap beads. But we're wasting time. Alex, I'm telling you for the last time to heave your bales aboard. I wouldn't mind sinking you as a lesson to the others. Come, man, or there'll be six widows at Fort William!"

The factor glared his resentment, but he silenced his tongue. Nobody knew

Demarest better than he. When his boat was emptied, it was ordered to haul off and wait. Another took its place. Its pelts joined those from McTavish's boat.

One by one every craft in the flotilla was relieved of its lading. The deck of the schooner from forepeak to cabin was covered with bales of precious beaver and marten, of otter and mink, of weasel and ermine. Already the voyageurs were storing it under hatches.

Nathan Weatherby and Ann Dutton stood in the waist. The girl's eyes were red and she sobbed. She dabbed at her nose with a bit of a cloth. This was her farewell to the lanky New Englander. For the dashing Demarest, not a word, not even a look; and the Frenchman was resentful, fiendishly jealous.

The cargo from the last *bateau* was aboard. Demarest waved a hand. "Cast off. Join McTavish and tell him he's on his own. He can go where he likes—back to the Kam or on to the Sault. My regards to his wives."

Weatherby sprang up on the rail. "Wait!" he yelled. "There's one thing more. We have a lady aboard, the sister of an English naval officer. You are to take her with you and deliver her to the nearest British post—"

"Cast off," Demarest shouted to the *bateau*. "The man's daffy. Cast off or I'll sink you!"

The line was thrown aboard, paddles dug deep and the boat shot away. Weatherby followed it with infuriated eyes. His hand went to his belt and he jerked out a pistol, one of a brace given him by Demarest a fortnight before. He leveled it at Demarest and pulled the trigger. The flint clicked, powder flashed in the pan, but there was no report. A misfire. He grabbed the second pistol, aimed it and pulled the trigger. Again there was only the flash of priming.

Demarest grinned. "I thought you might try to shoot me," he explained, "so I drew the charges last night while you slept. We still have use for the lady as a hostage. You see, the voyage isn't over yet."

Weatherby threw the pistol straight at Demarest, then drew his knife and charged up the companion. He never reached the captain of *L'Etoile du Nord*. Louis Quin-

tell struck him over the head with a wooden handspike. The Yankee went down.



HEADWINDS made *L'Etoile du Nord's* westing slow, then a spring gale forced Demarest into Siskiwitt Bay on Isle Royale where he lay for a week waiting for the weather to moderate.

His Yankee sailing-master was locked in the small brig where he had been taken while still senseless from the blow of Louis Quintell's handspike.

There was no compromise in Weatherby, a trait Demarest had seldom met before in any man. Most men would come to terms—for a price—but not the American. Demarest always took precautions when he visited the brig; two armed voyageurs would accompany him. The Frenchman wasn't afraid, but the Yankee had twice tried to kill him.

Ann Dutton, too, was stubborn and uncompromising, which was unusual in women, at least, the women Demarest had known. Although she had been within hail of his voice for a year, he had not been able to get on speaking terms with her. She disdained, ignored him; she was an iceberg without emotions, except where Weatherby was concerned.

But with Weatherby out of the way, her attitude might change. Demarest had changed other women's attitudes in his time. And no flitting light-o'-love plans had he for her. There was a palm-island in the West Indies, the plantation kingdom of a French marquis of the Bourbon regime which could be bought for a song. When Demarest had been with Jean Lafitte, they had careened there once to clean the ship's bottom, and Demarest had been enthralled by the place.

And during that week at Siskiwitt, while the northers howled outside, throwing spray over the bar, Ann Dutton and that palm-isle became inextricably entangled in Demarest's imagination. He could see her, tall, stately, dignified, yet soft and alluring, presiding over the functions that would go with the establishment. He would set up on the island as a wealthy country squire, plantation-owner and strict abider of law and order. And some day—who knew?—perhaps there would

CHAPTER VI

"CONFUSION TO KING GEORGE"

even be a pardon for past offenses. He built elaborate air-castles in which London, Paris, yes, even Quebec and Montreal figured.

But what to do with the stubborn Weatherby? Demarest paid another visit below decks to the brig, not forgetting his two-man escort.

"Look, American! I'll lay my cards on the table. This English girl intrigues me more than any woman I've ever known. I don't know if you are in love with her or not. Nor do I know what her feelings are in regard to you. The bonds between you may simply be the result of her detention with us, aggravated by your confounded chivalry. After all, women of the British officer caste haven't much time for plebeian Yankees. I have as good a claim to her as you. I could have you knocked on the head and tossed overboard, but I don't want to kill you—"

"I'd kill you," Weatherby retorted, "like a snake, if I had the slightest opportunity!"

Demarest nodded. "Yes, and I may have you dumped over the side yet. Here's my proposition: I'll gamble with you for the girl. Dice, cards, the flip of a coin, any way you say. The loser to withdraw completely so far as she is concerned, and you to resume your former status aboard *L'Etoile du Nord* regardless of the outcome."

"You can go to hell, Anton Demarest, as far as I'm concerned! This venture is over for me. I'll not lift a finger again while I'm in your company. And once I get free I'll make it my business to end your lying existence. Now get your foul carcass out of this brig!"



L'ETOILE DU NORD cleared Siskiwitz Bay in the morning. The weather was sweet again. The breeze was from the west, almost a dead headwind. The schooner stood away on a long tack which, with another leg on the opposite tack, would fetch *Sieur Duluth Bay*. Then for the St. Croix, the Mississippi and Louisiana.

Weather on Lake Superior is as variable as that in the Gulf. At noon the vessel ran into fog. The transition was startling. One moment the ship had been leaping through bright sunshine; the next, there was no sun, no blue sky, only an oppressive wet gray mist.

With no shipping on the lake, with two hundred miles of deep open water before him, Demarest did not shorten sail. However, fifteen minutes after the fog had closed in, he heard a strange sound, the boom of what sounded like a great gun. Another and another followed, then a rumble of noise, the broadside of big guns. Was it thunder? Whatever it was, it certainly sounded like the discharge of caronades. Demarest was taking no chances. He gave orders to hard-a-lee, to clew up the tops'ls, to set men at the tackles, to sing out—

The remainder of the command died on his lips, nor was it executed, because the fog, which must have been a bank only a few miles wide, thinned out abruptly. Once more *L'Etoile du Nord* was in the bright sunshine, the wide-stretching water breaking in low, white-capped rollers be-

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

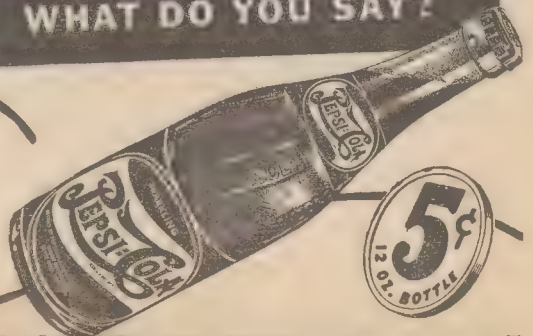
WHAT DO YOU SAY?

All the same except one... which is the odd picture?



ANSWER:

Number Five. He is only "two-haired"



fore her. But the lake was not bare of shipping. Off the starboard quarter, west three or four miles, under a pall of powder-smoke, three smallish brigs and one large schooner were locked together in an angry knot. The ships of America and England, built on Lake Superior, had fallen foul of each other and were going to it after the fashion of both nations.

"I can't cheat the American of this sight," Demarest told Jean Lebouf, handing him the key to the brig. "Tell him he may come on deck—if he'll give his word that he won't try to heave me overboard the first chance he gets."

Weatherby must have given the promise, for he was on the poop in a few seconds. Demarest handed him the long brass telescope. "The brigs are British," he told the American, "and the schooner is the ship the scout told us of. They're certainly pouring metal into each other, if noise and smoke mean anything. It looks from here as if the brigs had made fast to the Yankee. Ah, there goes her foremast!"

It needed no glass to see that the schooner was out-classed. Her large topsail bellied out in the wind, then flattened and blew away.

Bright-eyed and open-mouthed, the voyageurs watched the fight. And there was another, the English girl, who like a ghost almost, came from the companion out on the poop.

All four vessels were shrouded in their own angry vapors through which lurid red flashes tore. At times the wind blew away the smoke and the ships stood out plainly. They had all suffered, but the American was the most damaged. Ragged holes gaped in her hull; her forward end was a tangle of unshipped stays and cut rigging. The foremast had been shot off about ten feet above the deck and the big spar still lay athwart the ship, the gaff and topmast over the rail.

Weatherby turned to Demarest, and there was an ominous light in his blue eyes.

"A year ago in Montreal," he said, "you drank confusion to King George with me. Regardless of what else you are, I know that you are a man of courage. Will you make good that toast? Will you help that American vessel?"

"I can't," Demarest replied, troubled.

"Look, after a year's toil I'm not taking a chance on losing what we have under hatches. I have no country, Weatherby. Personally I'd like to see the American win, but I have no right to ask my men to forfeit everything that we've all worked for so hard."

"If the British win," Weatherby argued, "they'll be after us like hounds after a hare. We'll never reach *Sieur Duluth Bay*. It's to our interest, to yours, to go in on the side of the schooner."

Demarest felt the strength of the statement, but for once in his life he was indecisive. He shook his head. "We'll wear off and let them fight it out between themselves. Neither side will be able to follow us after it's over."



WEATHERBY had edged near. Demarest suspected nothing, torn perhaps, by the conflict of his own indecision. Weatherby lunged, grabbed the pistol under Demarest's sash, threw it to cock and the Frenchman stared into its muzzle. And the charge had not been drawn from this pipe.

"Your promise—" Demarest reminded the American.

"For once is no better than yours," Weatherby retorted. "Demarest, I'll kill you, spatter your brains all over the deck, unless you tell the men we're going in on the side of the American, order stations and put the ship on the proper course. You have only a minute to decide!" He shook his head, a warning to the voyageurs on the poop not to interfere. Regardless of what happened to him, he'd have enough reflex action to pull the trigger. The slightest movement from any voyageur and Demarest would be a dead man.

"Put up the pistol," Demarest laughed, a hearty, carefree laugh, as though a burden had been lifted from him. "We'll go in. I guess I wanted an excuse. No, you needn't fear treachery. I'll keep my word this time."

"I am waiting for those orders," Weatherby snapped.

"All right, here they are. We haven't enough men to man all the guns and work ship, too. We'll haul around on the other tack and I'll take the men to the carron-

ades. They're easier to handle than the chasers and they throw more metal. You take the wheel and put us alongside the brig to the leeward of the American. We'll give her a broadside as we go by, come around on the wind and give her the starboard guns on the return. We'll luff, go in on the opposite tack and let the second brig have it, repeat the maneuver with the third, that is, if we're still able to. If we're afloat after that, I'll be back on the poop to look things over."

Weatherby took the wheel. Demarest told off four men to stay on deck, then with the others he went to the guns. By the time the ports were open Weatherby had the schooner within twenty-five yards of their first target.

The carronades blasted. They were so close and so true was Demarest's aim that Weatherby saw the shot strike the brig, peppering her between rail and waterline. Then a cloud of smoke shut her out completely.

Demarest ordered the gunners to the other side. The schooner was now heeling before the wind, coming about, her deck at a forty-five-degree angle. There was good stuff in her timbers else her spars would have gone by the side. Weatherby evened off and foamed down on the same brig. Two hundred yards, fifty, twenty-five, ten separated the ships; the Yankee was certainly getting close enough. Down at the guns Demarest raised a hand, matches went to the pieces and the guns let loose their load of metal. With his face to a port he saw splinters and debris spew from the Englishman. Then the dense pall of smoke from his own discharge hid her from view.

Carrying out the instructions, Weatherby ran well to leeward of the locked ships, filled away on the other tack, on a course that would put him alongside the second brig. But this Englishman was waiting. He'd seen, probably with dismay, a strange ship pour two broadsides into his sister-ship. And when *L'Etoile du Nord* came alongside a hail of musketry met her, but no cannon shot. The brigs were smallish, and no doubt had moved all their guns to the side nearest the schooner, which was a large vessel, carrying as much iron, perhaps, as the three British ships put together.

And there was something else in that welter of powder smoke: a hearty American huzzah. The American sailors were cheering their unknown friend—or perhaps by this time he was known to them. There had been Harrison's scout to tell them.

Demarest heard an answering huzzah from Weatherby, and he envied the man who had a country to love so much. He drowned out the cheer in the broadside he poured into the musket-spitting Englishman whose side almost touched his gunmuzzles. Splinters and planking spouted skyward. Then by her, scudding, wearing, returning before the wind to let her have three more twenty-four pound shot in her midriff.



A HALF-DOZEN times did *L'Etoile du Nord* thus wear, scud and foam down on the brigs, sending in her small but lusty broadsides. And bit by bit the tide of battle was reversed. The fire from the brigs was slackening. Then suddenly *L'Etoile du Nord* fell off, into the trough, rolling drunkenly. Demarest rushed on deck. Two of the men he had left with Weatherby were under the rail, hard hit. Another was at the wheel, trying to bring the schooner out. Booms threshed wildly, swinging from starboard to port, almost jerking the masts out of her as she rolled and pitched.

Weatherby was down, too, hurt, how badly Demarest couldn't tell. But he wasn't alone. Ann Dutton was with him, pallid but determined, and no prude now as she tore frantically at her petticoat for bandages.

Getting the ship before the wind they ran off to leeward a mile, and, heaving to, took stock of damages. The schooner had little other than a few musket-balls through canvas and in plank, but both voyageurs were badly wounded and unconscious. So was Weatherby, not mortally, but likely to be unless a surgeon dug out the slug. And among all his many and varied accomplishments Demarest did not happen to number the calling of a surgeon. He assumed that there would be one aboard the combatants.

He had paid little attention to the battle still going on, but suddenly he became

aware of the cessation of the cannonading. Nor did he need a glass to see white flags fluttering from the brigs. They had struck! The American ensign still flew from the peak of a battered, and perhaps sinking, but victorious schooner.

Demarest ordered a boat over the side. In it he placed Weatherby and the two voyageurs. He had a hatch opened and a number of bales of the best fur taken from the hold. Then he wrote a letter. Before the boat pushed off toward the frantically signaling American ship, he gave the letter to—oh, yes, he sent the girl off in the boat, too—Ann Dutton.

The letter read:

Dear Weatherby,

Never before have I been such an old woman. However, you are too badly hurt to make that cruise to New Orleans and I'm adhering to the original plan. You have two voyageurs with you. See that they get their share from the pelts I am sending along with you. As you may incur some expense in getting them to a market, I am adding a few bales extra to cover it. Your share should be about ten thousand dollars; the men's, perhaps three thousand each. Now, seeing that you can't object, some personal comment.

I let the girl go, Weatherby, because—well, she's not my type. More like you, straightlaced and prim. After all, you New Englanders and the English are the same people. You'll fight like the devil between yourselves, but stick together

like tar in a seam against everyone else.

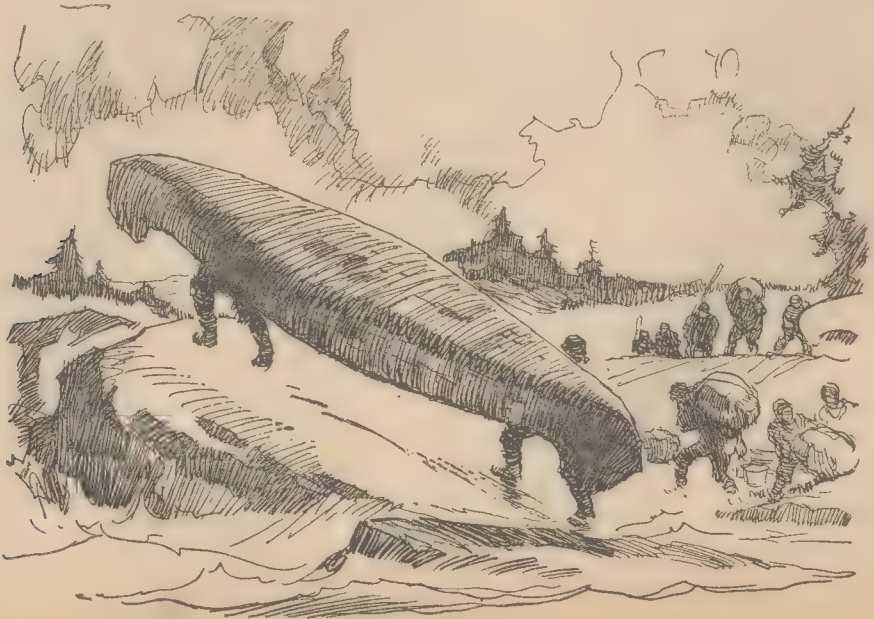
Well, you'll probably marry her. If you do, I'll bet my share of the Kam loot that you two will raise the smuggest brood of sour-faced brats every spawned in New England. However, if there's one amongst them who has any devil in him, you might name him after me.

As for myself, I am looking forward to seeing a hot-blooded Creole girl I once knew many years ago in New Orleans. *Au revoir*, Weatherby, and confusion to King George!

Anton Demarest

After the boat had returned from the American schooner, the *Commodore Perry*, with the captain's most cordial thanks and the assurance that Weatherby and the two voyageurs were receiving competent medical attention, *L'Etoile du Nord* was put on the course for *Sieur Duluth Bay*.

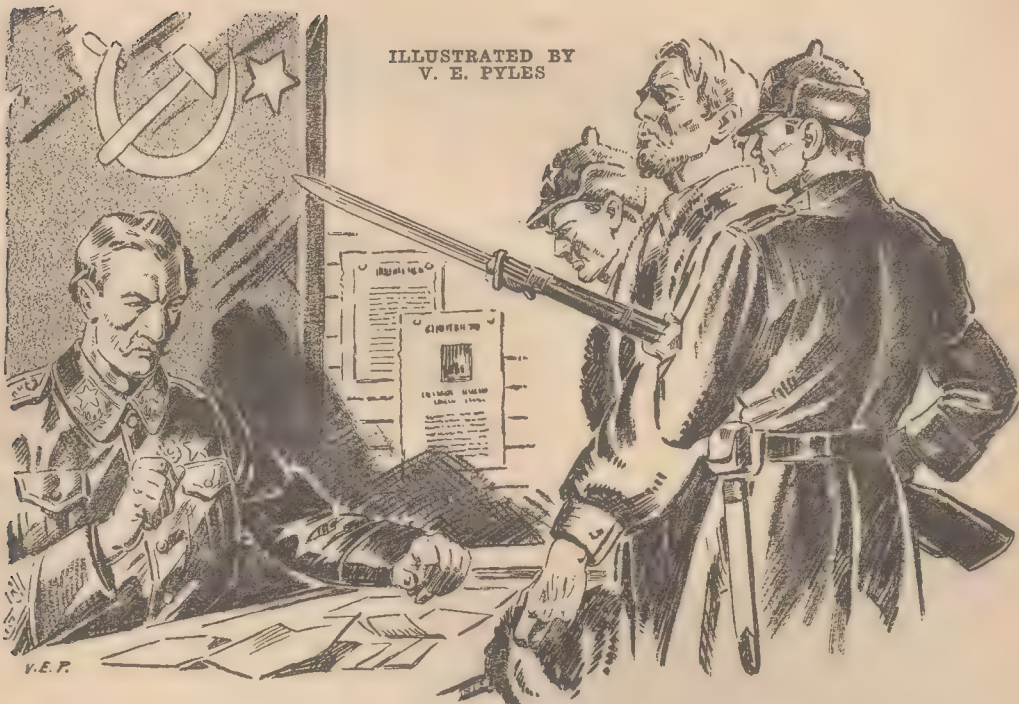
But some of the tang had gone from the venture. It would be a long time, and it would take a lot more than the wealth under hatches, more than the Creole girl in New Orleans to give it that zest that it had held before the day when Anton Louis Marie Demarest, man without a country, man without a king, had captured His Majesty's ship *Hawk* off Long Point down in the Lake of the Eries. And that palm-isle in the Indies was only a stinking sandspit.



IT HAD TO BE FOG

By
STANLEY C. VICKERS

ILLUSTRATED BY
V. E. PYLES



"Why did you remain in Chudova when the enemy came?" the major inquired softly.

IVAN RHUKOV, shuffling through the deserted, damp, dawn-lit village of Chudova, stopped for a moment to catch his breath. The hill was steep and Ivan's destination, the squat stone building which seemed rooted to the ground, was at the very top.

Studying the outlines of the building, Ivan smiled sadly. The old fortress and he had quite a bit in common. Neither had ever fulfilled the grand expectations which had accompanied his start in life. The fortress, high on the west bank of the Petrugra River, had been built to check the advance of Napoleon in 1812. But Napoleon had chosen to advance on Moscow by another route, leaving the

fortress unscarred by shellfire for one hundred and thirty years—leaving it still sturdy for its ignominious fate of housing Germans who had seized Chudova two years before.

As a Russian, Ivan felt pity for the little fortress. Perhaps that was why he had remained when the rest of the village evacuated before the German advance. He smiled ruefully, shaking his head at the thought. It was a pretty thought, but Ivan had more practical reasons for remaining in Chudova. And, thus reminded of his early morning mission, Ivan resumed his climb.

He entered the fortress through a back window whose protective grill work had

long since rusted away. There were no sentries. Chudova was not in direct line with either German or Russian offensives. The German force which had its headquarters upstairs apparently felt very secure.

The small room Ivan had entered was used by the officers for their nightly card games. It was empty now, cluttered with playing cards, dirty ashtrays, glasses and—

Ivan pounced gleefully on the object for which he had been searching. It was a quart bottle, and it was only a little less than half full of whisky. He slid it reverently in a pocket of his tattered coat and began hurrying through the business of cleaning the room.

Before he had finished, a German lieutenant, on his way to a lavatory, looked in and smiled contemptuously at him. Ivan grinned and continued his work. He could guess why the Germans tolerated his presence. The idea of a Russian peasant willing to clean up after them was warming to their Teutonic hearts.

After the lieutenant had left, Ivan shrugged and took a drink from the bottle he had stolen. Certainly Ivan Rhukov, a decrepit old peasant, was of no use to Russia's struggle for freedom. Surely he would be forgiven for licking a few drops of whiskey from German boots.

Ivan sighed. Such thinking always depressed him. He dropped his broom and walked brazenly upstairs, after another long drink. Three officers were working in the headquarters room. The teletype was clicking out its message to other German headquarters along the front to the south.

The equipment in the room reminded Ivan of the days in Moscow. Not that he wished to be reminded, but some things can never be erased entirely. Arrogantly, he walked to the bulletin board and stared at its message in German; the same message which had been sent out over the teletype, he supposed.

"Hey, Ivan! Get out of here!" one of the Germans ordered in his faulty, heavily-accented Russian.

Ivan turned to face him. He grinned. "I cross river," he said slowly, so they would understand him. "I shoot some rabbits and you have some fresh meat tomorrow?"

Another of the officers began speaking rapidly in German to the one who had accosted Ivan. "Let the fool go," Ivan heard him say. "He gets rabbits when none of the soldiers can. Some hasenpfeffer will repay us for all the whisky he steals."

The Germans laughed and Ivan waved permission. He shuffled away. It had never occurred to them that he might understand German. At the Moscow Institute, Ivan recalled grimly, he had once taught meteorology classes from German textbooks.

Outside, Ivan drank more whisky. Then, carrying his old-fashioned shotgun, he headed for the rowboat at the riverbank. They allowed him to go about pretty much as he pleased. But it was safer to ask permission when he wished to cross the Petruga.



IVAN tramped contentedly through the woods on the other side of the river. The approaching spring had left only a few inches of snow on the ground and he searched it for rabbit tracks. The whiskey was a warm ball in his stomach and his head was no longer filled with depressing thoughts about Russia fighting for her life and a man who once taught at the Moscow Institute.

By late afternoon, he had three rabbits cached along the trail back to his rowboat. He had eaten his sandwich and smoked one of the cigar butts he had retrieved from the fortress card room. Now, he was standing at the edge of a swamp, watching. He wanted one more rabbit. Finally, he saw the hopping patch of white fur. He fired. But before he could even start walking toward where the dead rabbit lay, a harsh command rang out.

Startled and trembling, Ivan raised his hands. The two men who had appeared out of the brush were stern-faced Russian soldiers. They searched him for a pistol or knife, took his shotgun and then began marching him away by the arm.

It took some while for Ivan to get over his open-mouthed astonishment at finding Russian soldiers where there were supposed to be none. When he finally could speak, the soldiers gruffly advised him to

save his speech for a talk with the major.

Soon, they reached the outbuildings of an abandoned collective farm—only Ivan could see that it was no longer abandoned. A Russian force was quartered there. Soldiers peered at him curiously and silently as he was hustled along. Finally, his two captors led him into a small barn and Ivan realized he was at the headquarters. He took off his bedraggled fur hat when the soldiers released their hold on his arms, and stood twisting it sheepishly in his hands, standing before the desk in the center of the room.

"We found him sneaking through the woods, Major Moroshilov." The soldier who spoke laid the shotgun on the desk. "He carried this gun."

"What is your name and where are you from?" the major asked tonelessly.

Ivan ran a hand nervously through his long, matted gray hair. He trembled in the layers of ragged clothing bundled about him. "I am Ivan Rhukov, Major," he mumbled, opening wide his bloodshot eyes in innocence, "from the village of Chudova."

"From Chudova?" The major pursed his lips interestedly. "And what were you doing in the woods?"

"Food is not plentiful in Chudova," Ivan answered simply. "I was hunting. There are more rabbits on this side of the river."

"And how did you cross the river?"

"I have a rowboat, Major."

The major lowered his eyes. "Why did you remain in Chudova when the enemy came?" he inquired softly. "The village was evacuated. And, if you can come and go as you please, why do you stay there? Are the Germans such good masters?"

"I—I am an old man, Major," Ivan faltered. "I had no place to go—no relatives to the east."

The major's nostrils dilated. The unmistakable odor of cheap whisky was permeating the room. The old fool was half drunk. It seemed inconceivable that if the enemy suspected this raid and had sent out this man as a spy, they would send him almost reeling.

While the major pondered, Captain Likhon, the detachment's meteorologist, kept staring at the prisoner from the rear of the room. It seemed absurd that he

should think he knew this filthy peasant. Yet—the eyes, the tall, gaunt figure. Likhon half rose from behind his desk. The Moscow Institute—a laboratory—a tall, thin man standing, lecturing.

"Professor Ivan Romesky!"

Everyone turned to Likhon in astonishment. Ivan's wide eyes met the captain's for a moment, then dropped.

"I studied meteorology under Romesky at Moscow!" Likhon exclaimed. "Twelve years ago. I swear it's the same man!"

The major swung his startled gaze back to the prisoner.

"I have been known as Ivan Rhukov for many years," Ivan said with dignity, over the pounding of his heart. Then he grinned foolishly. "Once—long ago—I was Ivan Romesky."

"Political?" Major Moroshilov inquired of Likhon, who had left his desk and stood beside him.

Likhon shook his head. "As I remember—" He hesitated, wrinkling his brow not from puzzlement, but from embarrassment. This old man in peasant rags, smelling of whiskey, had once been his instructor, one of the most highly esteemed weather men in Russia.

"No, there was nothing political about it," Ivan supplied casually. "I was thrown out because of continual drunkenness." He shifted his eyes to Likhon in friendliness. "I seem to recall you now. You were in a laboratory class. Anton—Anton . . ."

"Anton Likhon," the captain replied uncomfortably.



"IVAN ROMESKY," the major continued solemnly, "you were a scientist of Russia once. Perhaps you can again be of assistance to the Russian cause. We have let the enemy hang on at Chudova for two years, but now it has become important to control navigation the whole length of the Petrug. Tell me"—the major leaned imperiously forward—"how many Germans are garrisoned across the river? What do their defenses consist of?"

"There are about fifteen hundred," Ivan answered eagerly. "The principal gun emplacement is at the base of the old fortress, which is also their head-

quarters. There are two or three machine guns along the river bank."

"I noted the gun emplacement this morning," the major observed in an aside to the other officers. He arose and began pacing. "If we must attack in clear weather, it would be best to move at once before a scouting party stumbles over us. I am afraid we can afford to wait no longer for the fog cover we want." He paused and stared hopelessly at Captain Likhon, the meteorologist.

Likhon grimaced and shoved his hands deep in his pockets. "The weather comes to us from there," he complained ruefully, pointing to the west, toward Poland and occupied Europe. "If I could get weather reports from that area, instead of from our own country. . ." He shrugged disgustedly.

"Well, if we must attack without the aid of fog, we must!" the major summed up grimly.

They seemed to have almost forgotten Ivan. But Ivan had been listening, struggling to fit together the whole picture

from their comments. "There is often fog here in spring," he offered excitedly. Then he hiccupped.

The major gazed coldly at him. "Perhaps the learned professor can assist Captain Likhon predict the weather for the next three days," he growled sarcastically.

Ivan flushed. His head was becoming clearer. He recognized the fact that these Russian soldiers loathed him. He had remained in a German-occupied village, and he had wasted talents which had been fostered by the Soviet. But as for staying in Chudova, he had thought the war was about over, anyway. From the



A terrific din suddenly boomed out of the grayness and the landing barges were showered with the debris of the exploding fortress.



scraps of information he had garnered at German headquarters, he had supposed the Red Armies were in full flight, not attacking. Ivan pawed at his mouth feverishly as the picture became clearer. These soldiers were hoping for fog, but they weren't sure about the weather. Loathe him, would they? He giggled loudly.

"Take him to the shed," Moroshilov barked. "Make sure that he doesn't wander back to Chudova—perhaps after more rabbits," he added dryly.

At the command, Ivan Romesky became suddenly grave. "May I say something more?" he requested with incongruous dignity. The major lifted his eyebrows cynically and Ivan continued as if speaking from a lecture platform. "As I understand it, you wish to know if there will be fog within the next three days. If you will permit me to study the weath-

er map which lies on Captain Likhon's desk, I can probably tell you."

Moroshilov turned to Likhon in open amusement. The captain shrugged uncertainly. Ivan Romesky had once been distinguished in his field. But even discounting the obvious condition to which he had sunk, Likhon defied any meteorologist to predict with certainty on the basis of information available.

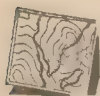
Taking the hesitation for permission, Ivan bowed to Likhon, then walked to the desk on which the weather map lay. He bent over it, seemingly oblivious of the eyes upon him. He began tracing isobars and temperature zones with his finger.

The major, half smiling, approached with Likhon and another captain to where Ivan hovered over the map. "This might be entertaining," he whispered to the captains, winking.

"Hmmm," Ivan began purring. "You see, Captain Likhon, everything here indicates the approach of a warm front from the west. The—"

"How does everything indicate it?" Likhon interrupted coldly.

Ivan grimaced as if at a particularly stupid pupil. "You have failed to notice, Captain, the peculiar alignment of high pressure areas. They form almost a solid front."



LIKHON frowned. The man wasn't even making sense. "I fail to see the connection with an approaching warm front," he said levelly.

Moroshilov began shifting impatiently. The discussion was over his head and didn't seem to be approaching anywhere.

Ivan nibbled a finger furiously. "Captain," he asked suddenly, "when did you take your last barometer reading?"

"This afternoon at four thirty."

"Have you any reason to suspect that the barometer will drop?"

"No," Likhon answered confusedly. "The readings have been quite constant."

Ivan smiled in sly triumph. "Go out and read your barometer now. If my calculations are correct, it has dropped considerably. Possibly seven millibars."

Likhon wheeled and strode to the door. Either this man was talking nonsense or else he knew more meteorology than him-

self, Anton Likhon, third in his class at the Moscow Institute.

The captain's indignant thoughts were shattered. He had reached his instruments and was staring unbelievably at the barometer. It read 1005, a drop of eight millibars. He walked back inside dazedly.

"It's impossible," he complained angrily, as the major listened with new interest. "How, on the basis of what you read in my weather map, could you know the pressure would drop?"

Ivan smiled sadly. His expression said plainly that it was neither the time nor place to complete the captain's inadequate education. Instead, he turned to Moroshilov. "You can prepare your men to attack at dawn," he said flatly. "I can say, almost positively, that the whole area will be submerged in heavy fog by then."

Moroshilov slumped to the edge of Likhon's desk and studied this incredible person. Either he was a good actor, crazy, or knew what he was talking about. At the cost of only a nine-hour wait, the major decided to gamble on the latter possibility. He leaned backward toward Captain Timeroff who stood gaping behind him. "Tell Corporal Rushka to pick nine of his best men for demolition work at dawn. And you'd better have our little flotilla ready also, just in case."

"But how—" Likhon stood almost beligerently before Ivan.

Ivan sighed. "You wanted fog," he said tiredly. "You will have it at dawn." Then, without awaiting a reply, he walked to a cleared space near the wall and the stove. He curled contentedly on the floor and from somewhere within the recesses of his many garments, he extricated the bottle. Soon he was snoring.

Likhon strode outside again. He looked at the stars, sniffed the clear, frosty air. "He's mad," he murmured unemotionally but with great conviction. He included both Ivan Romesky and Moroshilov in the statement.

Captain Likhon slept on a straw pallet near his desk. He awoke at four A.M. to the sound of the major's voice barking commands. He scrambled to his feet and brushed the wisps of straw from his uniform.

"Recall all patrols immediately," Moroshilov instructed the officer standing be-

fore his desk. "We are attacking at five thirty."

The lieutenant saluted and withdrew.

"Captain Timeroff," the major called, "any report on the boats?"

"They are already on their way from Lalina, five miles up the river," Timeroff responded.

Likhon, his face drawn, walked past the major's desk, out into the pre-dawn. He felt the wetness on his face. He walked ten paces into the fog, and when he turned he could not make out the outlines of the headquarters. He stepped back to the door and reentered. He looked to the right and met the soft, smiling eyes of Ivan Romesky who was sitting on the floor watching, his hands clasped around his knees.

"Major Moroshilov," Likhon said huskily, "I would like to be transferred from meteorology to active combat in the ranks."

The major looked up and chuckled. "Don't take it so hard, Likhon," he joked. "After all, we have our fog. It is no time to quibble about who brought it. Seriously"—the major lowered his voice—"directly after this affair is finished, I am going to see that our friend, Romesky, is invited back to the Institute at Moscow. The man's a genius. Such talents can't be wasted in this hour of Russia's trial."



IT WAS beautiful to sit up there on the riverbank and watch it happen. At five sharp, Corporal Rushka and nine men left in two rowboats for the other side of the river. In one of the boats, a large, square box was carried. Before they had pulled fifteen yards from shore, they disappeared into the fog.

Immediately, the rest of the detachment lined up on the beach. Other boats appeared from nowhere, manned by rough-looking peasants. Seven flat-bottomed, low barges arrived. Eighty men crowded into each barge, the remainder into the rowboats.

It was astonishing how quietly the men massed themselves to push the attack across the two-hundred-and-fifty-yard width of the Petruga. There was the scraping sound of feet, but not a word spoken above a whisper, and then only by the officers.

Captain Timeroff, stationed at the southern end of the beach, was the first to hear the muffled chug-chug of the motorboat. He ran frantically to Moroshilov. "It must be their patrol boat," he hissed.

The major hurried to the barge nearest the approaching sound of the motor. The signal flashed along the beach. "Shove off!"

Soldiers standing on barge sterns began poling. The rowboats clustered behind the barges. Moroshilov directed the mounting of a machine gun on the bow of his barge and kept praying that Corporal Rushka would be on time with the explosion.

Halfway across, Moroshilov's peering eyes caught the gray shape of the patrol boat slipping into view, heading straight upriver. It was an open launch with a five-man crew. Before the startled, open-mouthed patrol could reach their forward gun, machine-gun fire raked their deck. The withering fire cut down the five. The launch kept sliding up the river and Moroshilov knew that for five dead Germans, there might be eight hundred dead Russians. The staccato blast was sure to alarm the garrison.

The river fleet was now so close to a landing that they could hear the guttural commands suddenly ring out. They were so close that a split second later, when the terrific din boomed out of the grayness, the barges were showered with the debris of the exploded fortress.

The men in the boats leaped ashore. When they charged up the rise toward the smoking ruins of the fortress, they met only a feeble outburst from one of the German machine guns.

The demolition of the enemy headquarters had proved effective. The Germans were completely demoralized. German officers lay scattered in the jagged heap of smouldering rubble—and among them lay scattered the remains of Corporal Rushka and his nine demolition squad volunteers.

Yes, it was beautiful to sit up on the opposite bank and watch and listen. Romesky could picture it all. He rolled over on his back and stared unseeingly into the heavy fog.

The fog!

This morning, just before the attack,

Major Moroshilov had spoken strange things to him. Things he had never expected to hear again. The major had called him "Professor," had lamented the fact that a great Russian meteorologist was not being honored and used by the Soviets. The major had, moreover, promised that he, Dmitri Moroshilov, would personally see that Professor Romesky was returned to his post at the Moscow Institute.

Ivan turned his head and spat into the ground, recalling the major's parting words before he had gone to lead the attack: "*Professor, you've probably forgotten more meteorology than young pups like Likhon ever knew.*"

The old man in the peasant rags laughed humorlessly. The major's words might be true, but the fact remained that the meteorology Ivan had forgotten was forgotten forever.

How curious it all was! Now that the fortress was demolished, the major might never learn why the Germans had maintained a garrison in the isolated position for so long. Captain Likhon might never know that Professor Ivan Romesky for eighteen months had been nothing more than a lackey for German officers', a head-quarter's janitor, living for the whiskey he could beg or steal.

Only the idle curiosity of an old weatherman had prompted him to read each morning the report on the fortress bulletin board—the report prepared by crack German meteorologists at one of the principal German weather stations of the eastern front, Chudova. A weather station which received and compiled reports from other stations all over occupied Europe. /

He smiled, remembering Likhon's chagrin at the accuracy of his prediction. And he remembered the report he had read on the bulletin board that morning before he wandered off across the river after rabbits.

WARM FRONT ACROSS POLAND
MOVING NORTHEAST.
HEAVY FOG ON PETRUGA BY
DAWN. NOTIFY PATROL BOATS.

Professor Ivan Romesky wiped his eyes hard with the back of his dirt-encrusted hand. Then he reached inside his coat for the ever-present bottle. Yes, it was much simpler to remain Ivan Rhukov from now on. He would drink to the Red Army, to the major, and to Captain Likhon.

But most of all, he decided, he would just drink.





Doolittle draws a second semicircle inside the first. "What the hell's the good of that?" the gunner sneers.

NAZIS IS MUGS

By JONATHAN FETTES

JOHAN DOOLITTLE, the quartermaster behind the wheel, gives and takes a spoke. It's three days since we left Cardiff and the old *Semerang*, banging her way westward, is rolling with the grace of a teakettle, which makes steering hard. "War's a mug's game," he says, "and them that makes it is mugs." He's a mild-looking little guy, and while he don't claim to be no friend of the famous American flyer, I sometimes think he ain't sorry his name is what it is. He has a way sometimes of sticking out his chest like he was proud.

"You couldn't call those guys mugs," I says, nodding down at the wet Atlantic where submarines is thicker than cab-

bages in a victory garden. "Them submarine Nazis may be bloody so-and-so's, but they ain't mugs."

Doolittle gives another spoke. "Just plain mugs," he insists, and gives an emphatic nod. "They're going to get licked in the end and they know it. Just plain mugs."

A lone Hurricane zooms up out of the mist, and just when I'm thinking maybe we're going to get an escort after all, he disappears over the Irish Coast, a strip of which is still showing astern of us like a bit of green ribbon in a girl's hair. It's a disappointment, of course, for the roar of a plane's engines overhead is damned comforting to a sailor's ears. No subma-

rine skipper is going to surface his craft while he thinks there's a hostile plane around. Not unless he's looking for sudden death.

Doolittle takes his eyes from the plane's track and pins them on the compass in front of him. "It's like putting two and two together," he says. "Guys what make war is mugs; Nazis make war. Therefore," he draws two strokes in the air with his forefinger, "Nazis is mugs."

"Q.E.D." I says, and moves over to the wing of the bridge in case our lynx-eyed skipper comes up. He's a little snip of a man; and he won't like it if he finds his chief mate talking to one of the men. I don't see where it does any harm myself, and sometimes you learn things. But this Doolittle, now; a man can't learn much listening to his talk about putting two and two together.

The land astern of us grows to look like a smudged pencil mark, then drops out of sight altogether. Alone on the empty ocean, the *Semerang* juts her blunt bow into a sea and goes staggering on. Aft on the poop, I sees the R.N.R. gunner walking his beat where the ugly muzzle of the four-inch thrusts its snout out over the stern like a shortened elephant's trunk. Darkness comes down over the ship and I hear Doolittle strike four bells. And somehow I get to thinking of how I see him first as he comes over the gangway in Cardiff, a little, short man, wistful-looking as all hell, and wearing a queer knitted helmet that comes down near over his ears. "Been torpedoed three times," he tells me, "and learned something each time. Signing out again. Quartermaster, this voyage."

I remember how that last sets me back on my heels. The *Semerang* ain't no ocean liner, being nothing but a four-hundred-foot tramp, and I ain't expecting uniforms or anything like that. And this Doolittle, he don't look no more like a quartermaster than a pimple looks like the Rock of Gibraltar. But in war time you take what you get and you're thankful.



THE *Semerang* shakes to the thrust of her engines and goes staggering on into the night, her squat, unlighted hull firm looking against the moving sea. A star

slips from behind a cloud like a pip squeezed out from between almighty fingers and hangs laughing in the sky like it's glad to be there. Then a firm step sounds on the ladder and Captain Barnes heaves his short figure onto the bridge.

"Keeping a good lookout?"

He's got a riling habit of throwing questions like he don't think a man's ever doing enough. But he's a good skipper and I don't complain. "Seen nothing," I says, "unless you count a Hurricane land-bound that takes no more notice of us than it would an empty barrel. We ought to have an escort; or be in convoy, at least."

"Can't have everything," he says. "Probably we're through with the worst of it now until we hit the American coast. And by that time we should be meeting in with the off-shore patrol."

"I wouldn't bet on being through with the worst of it," I says. "Not with them Nazi subs doing sixteen knots and better. We're as like to meet one in mid-ocean as anywhere."

"Well, well," he says, "we'll have to take what we get. Meantime we'll act as if we were clear of the damned things. Tomorrow you can begin getting the ship painted. There's enough dirt on her to make a paddock for a cow."

It's then this Doolittle speaks up. He's got a quid of tobacco in his cheek big as an apple core, and he kind of talks round it. "I wouldn't paint her if I was you, sir," he says. "They painted the last ship I was in—fair slicked her up—and the paint wasn't hardly dry before a sub smacked a torpedo into us. Took us for some crackerjack liner 'stead of an old tramp. Maybe if we hadn't been painted, they wouldn't have smacked us." All the time he's talking he's staring earnestly at the lubber line on the compass bowl.

A seaman comes smartly onto the bridge and reports a change of lookout. Captain Barnes touches his cap absently. He's sober-faced like he's thinking over something.

On the other side of the bridge Judson, the second mate, has his ears wagging like a semaphore. He's a Conway lad, and a stickler for discipline. In two jumps he's alongside Doolittle and the whip-lash of his tongue's cracking over the little fellow. "Who the hell asked for your

opinion?" he says. "Talk to your betters when they talk to you. Until then, keep a still tongue in your head."

Doolittle takes one hand from the wheel and touches his helmet. "No offense meant, sir," he says, "just talking what was in my mind. Like thinking out loud, sir."

Captain Barnes, without taking any notice of Judson, throws a thoughtful look at the blistered paint on our long, ungainly funnel with its trail of dirty smoke. Finally he says "Haw!" He says it again, then gives me an abrupt good night and goes down the ladder.

I see where he's got stuck with Doolittle's nonsense. "All I know is, I wish we was in convoy or had an escort. If a bomber comes over and drops a stick, we'll never know what hit us."

"I got an idea about that, sir." It's Doolittle again. He's at the wheel sawing away at the spokes and turning the quid of tobacco over in his jaw. A slight sea hits the *Semerang* on the port bow and he puts the wheel up, waiting for the swing. "I got an idea about bombers."

"Keep it," I says. "Keep it until it's rotten, then throw it away."



Charles Dye

"Who asked for your opinion?" the mate yells at Doolittle. "Talk to your betters when they talk to you!"

Now, I don't know what "Haw!" means; but next morning just after the sun comes slithering over the horizon and I'm handing the bosun his orders about painting the ship, Captain Barnes comes and plants himself in front of me. "Haw!" he says. "Maybe we could leave that painting to another time. No use putting fresh paint on a ship that may be in Davy Jones' locker before dark."



HE keeps his eyes fixed on the lubber line of the compass bowl and takes no notice. "Last ship I was in they had a Hurricane mounted on a catapult on the foc'sle head. Ransome and Rapier launching unit, they called it. The German bombers stayed away from us, sir. They didn't like the looks of the Hurricane."

"That was nice," I says. "And maybe it's your idea we could make one."

"Is anything any use?" I says, for

"Not make one," he says earnestly. "We wouldn't have time for that," he says, as though making a Hurricane and its catapult apparatus would be easy if only we had time. He whips a sheet of paper from his pant's pocket and hands it over. "There's a drawing of one," he says. "A man don't get torpedoed without learning something. So when I sees how the bombers stayed away from that thing, I took a drawing of it." He shifts the quid of tobacco in his mouth and spits. "You and me is agreed, sir, that the Nazis is mugs. Suppose we paint one of them things on the foc'sle head. Then if a bomber comes over, he'll think our plane's in the air and he'll shove off again. Don't forget, sir, Nazis is mugs."

I takes the bit of paper and looks at it, first one way, then t'other. It's got a lot of lines and figuring on it and it looks like it might be a drawing of a grasshopper that precedes the ice age. I'm getting ready to give it the horse laugh when a voice behind me says "Haw!" and Captain Barnes reaches out his hand and lays hold of the drawing. He stares at it for a time. "Is this exact?" he says.

"Exact as exact, sir," Doolittle says. "Scale of an inch to the foot. And Nazis being mugs, maybe they'll take it for the real thing and stay away."

"It might be worth trying," Captain Barnes says. He takes a long careful look round the horizon, and there's nothing in the whole empty ocean but the old *Semerang* plugging her slow way westward. "It might be worth trying," he says again. "We're still within range of their four-motored bombers. Haw!" he says. "Better have the bosun along and explain what we want."

It takes us all day to paint that prehistoric grasshopper thing on our foc'sle head, and when it's done it looks like nothing but a lot of straight lines of different color messing up the fore part of the ship. But Doolittle seems pleased with it. "You got to remember those Nazis is mugs. And you can't tell what it looks like from aloft, sir. Probably seems the real thing from up there."

"I'll keep remembering that and feel happy," I says. I'm getting fed up with Doolittle. Only he don't seem to know it. "There's another thing," he says. "I been thinking about that gun we have

on our poop. I got an idea about that."

"Listen!" I says, "any more ideas out o' you—" Then I give up. If only he looked like a sailor instead of looking like an underfed monkey dressed up in dungarees and an old helmet, I could maybe tell him something. But the way it is, I give up.

After that he volunteers as a member of the gun crew and in his time off I see him hanging around the gun platform on the poop forever bothering the gunner with questions about range and wind deflections and what not. Then one day when I'm aft watching the gunner slam out a few practice rounds at an imaginary target, Doolittle catches sight of me. He beams and touches his helmet. "Like old times," he says. "I was in the gun crew in every ship I been in."

"You telling me!" I says, thinking of the three times he's been torpedoed, and wondering if maybe his name's Jonah. But when I talk to the gunner, I find him enthusiastic.

"Doolittle? Queer little blighter," he says, "but earnest as hell. Knows near as much about the gun as I do myself. And it's a good gun if only we get a chance to use it." He claps a hand on the still hot barrel. "A damned good gun." Then he comes back to Doolittle. "Queer little blighter. Always wanting to know things."



THEN one fine morning when he's standing his regular trick at the wheel, Doolittle gives me the lowdown on himself. "It's the bumps, sir," he says apologetically. "When I was a boy a perfesser read my bumps and says the bump o' curiosity is out o' all proportion to the rest o' me. That's why I'm always wanting to know about things, sir. Then when I knows about them, I just puts two and two together."

"Damn your two and two!" I says. "Get your bump working on that!"

Out of a hole in a cloud ahead of us comes a big plane so close I can hear the roar of its engines. Behind me, Captain Barnes yells an order to put the helm over. Then the plane's on top of us and a stick of bombs comes down screeching their usual high-pitched whistle. There's a *whumph* and something hits

us solid on the foredeck and a sheet of burning flame jumps skyward. The *Semerang* weaves sideways like a dancer and another near miss sends the water spouting over her bridge. I got time to turn and see the tail of the plane disappearing in the east. The gunner lets go a couple of shots after it, but without a high-angled gun it's useless. In no time at all the plane's out of sight.

"Focke-Wulf four-motored bomber," Doolittle says, squinting after it like he's well pleased with himself. "Knows 'em by the bump on their nose." He whips out a sheet of paper. "I studied the looks of planes once," he says. "There's a drawing of one. Exact as exact."

"You can take it with you to hell!" I says, for the ship's burning in three places and I got no time to look at his fancy drawings. I'm half way down the bridge ladder when I remember to tell him about the catapult contraption he has us paint on the foc'sle head. "Wouldn't keep a bug away!" I says.

The fire's burning bad in No. 1 and there's a hole in the deck you could drop a church through. We rigs a hose and runs the end of it down the hole and pumps half the Atlantic into the ship and gets the fire out. Lucky the Scotch whiskey loaded in No. 2 don't catch. Then the engineer comes along dragging a spare winch bed plate and claps a patch over the deck and we slap some paint on it. The gunner's bearing a hand; and when we're through I points out to him Doolittle's contraption on the foc'sle head and explain what it's supposed to be.

He scratches his head while he's examining the painting. "You know," he says, "I was thinking there was something funny the way that bomber high-tailed it for home without waiting to see results. Could be," he says.

"Could be! Could be your aunt was your uncle supposing she took to wearing trousers," I says, and goes back to my post on the bridge.

It's still Doolittle's trick at the wheel. He sees me and turns the quid of tobacco over in his jaw. "Kidded him good!" he says. "Didn't I tell you Nazis is mugs?"

"Kidded who good?" I says. "Didn't the damn swine near blow us out the water? So you kidded him good!"

"'Course we did," Doolittle says. "I

been studying them bombers and their tactics. Mostly they makes two runs over a ship. This guy makes only one. He makes only one 'cause he sees the catapult on our foc'sle head and he don't know it's only paint. Put two and two together and you can't deny it."

I'm getting ready to deny it and him and all his works when a voice behind me says "Haw!" and I turns, and there's the skipper tugging at his goatee the way he sometimes does when he's thinking hard. "Haw!" he says. "Maybe the man's right. Otherwise, how you going to explain that bomber scooting it for home before he sinks us?"

I don't try to explain it and we have peace for three days. Then a spell of bad weather comes out of the west. The *Semerang*, her stumpy pole masts describing arcs against a dirty sky, shoves her bow into a sea and the spray rattles like hailstones against the weather cloths. Down below, the engineers ease the revolutions and the ship's speed is reduced. A large cloud, wind driven, lays a tattered blanket over the ship. Captain Barnes, a resigned look on his face, listens to the mounting whistle of a full grown gale thrumming against the backstays. He goes into the chartroom and taps on the barometer. "The equinoctial gales; been expecting it," he says. "Better double up the lookouts and keep her zigzagging. Won't do to get smacked in this."

The crew grumbles a little at the order for double lookouts, like all seamen does at the prospect of extra work. But they knows their lives depends on being able to see the enemy before he sees them, and they keeps their eyes open. For a week we has a picnic of a time while the *Semerang* bobs up and down in one place making a hole in the water and the gale has its own way with her. Then as suddenly as it comes, the gale dies down. A bright sky pushes the horizon further and further away from the ship and we has time to see where she's taken more than an ordinary pounding. Besides some superstructure smashed and a couple of lifeboats missing—all of which is to be expected after the weather we'd had—a winch has gone and got itself broken adrift on the foredeck. I sends the third mate with a gang of A.B.s to heave it back in position, and while we're watch-

ing them go to work on it with Spanish windlass and levers, I points out to the Old Man the big patches of rust that's breaking out on the ship like the rash of a disease. "All for the lack of some paint," I'm telling him, when the lookout aft roars a warning.



"Strange craft coming up astern!"

Captain Barnes reaches for his glasses with one hand and rips a series of short blasts from the whistle with the other. "Lay aft to the gun!" he yells. "That thing coming up astern ain't fooling!"

What he sees is a submarine overhauling us at a spanking clip. By the time I get to the gun platform, it's raised us considerable. I takes a look at it through my glasses and sees a long black hull, smooth as a whale's belly, and on top of the hull, a conning tower dragging a wireless mast. The ugly looking thing's butting into the combers rolling between us while every thrust of her forefoot sends the spray flying. It don't take a mathematician to reckon she'll be up to us within an hour. Above the heads of the volunteers clustered round the gun, I catches the eye of the gunner and wags him a signal.

"Jerry?"

Before he has time to return an answer, Doolittle breaks away from a line of men hoisting out ammunition for the gun and picks up a pair of glasses hanging on the poop rail. "Let me have a look at her," he says. "I been studying them things."

"Thought it was bombers you been studying," the bosun says.

"Them things too." Doolittle stares at the U-boat through the glasses, then slips a sheet of paper from his pocket and stares at that. "Nazi submarine of the latest class," he announces. "Four torpedo tubes. Six-inch gun mounted forward. Speed 22 knots." He holds the sheet of paper up for all of us to see. "There's a drawing of one. Exact as exact."

While he's talking a puff of white breaks from the submarine's bow. A shell screeches over our heads. The R.N.R. gunner's toes tap out exciting talk to the deck as he stoops over his gunsight. I'm

waiting for the blast of the shot when Doolittle picks up a canvas covering and throws it over the gun. "Hold everything!" he says. "I got an idea!"

The gunner turns on him in a rage. "You got an idea!" he yells. "Hell! You got an idea!"

"I got an idea," the little man chatters. "That sub's out of our range. Keep our gun covered and he won't know what size gun we got. Then when he gets closer, we blast him."

"Another idea out 'o you—" I says, watching the Old Man on the bridge throw a bucket of water over the wheelhouse, which has been hit by a shell. Then I asks the question that's in all our minds. "Supposing the submarine don't come closer? Supposing she dives and smacks us with a torpedo?"

"She won't," Doolittle says, as confident as if God had just told him so. "I been studying them fellows' tactics. They won't waste a torpedo on a ship what don't seem worth painting. They'll try sinking us by gunfire."

"Maybe he's right at that, sir," one of the hands says, rubbing his finger over a rail that's bare of paint. "Never did see a ship needing paint so bad."

The crack of the Nazi's gun sounds closer. A shell pierces our hull above the waterline. Another one takes off our topmast clean as a knife's cut. The air's getting hotter and hotter with splinters when the telephone from the bridge rings a blast. "Haw!" Captain Barnes says over the wire. "What's Doolittle think about it?"

"Doolittle don't think," I says. "He's got a crazy idea about us holding our fire so the submarine won't know what size gun we has."

"Haw!" Captain Barnes says. "It's an idea. Better let him try it out."

I hangs down the receiver and looks across at the submarine. She's broadside on to the sea now and her smooth belly shows as she rolls. It don't do her gunner's aim any good. The next five shots goes over. He tries two more and one of 'em bursts on a bulwark rail. Doolittle dodges a splinter that whangs into a stanchion behind him. "That submarine," he says to the gunner, "how far off is she?"

The R.N.R. man throws him a sour

look. "About seven miles," he says, "and a hell of a big chance you has of seeing her any closer."

Doolittle drops to the deck on his knees, and while we gather round him crafing our necks to see what he's going to do, he takes a bit of chalk from his pocket and draws a semicircle on the base of the gun mount. "The seven mile mark," he says. Then he draws a second semicircle inside the first. "Call that the five mile mark, which is the effective range of our gun. The thing is to wait until the Nazis close the distance between them two lines. Then we lets 'em have it!"

"Easy," someone says, "only how you going to get 'em there?"

Doolittle blinks a couple of times. Then he marks a cross inside the second semicircle. "The four mile mark," he says. He looks up, his eyes stabbing at the gunner. "See what I mean? You points your gun at this here mark; that is, you points it at the four mile range and fire at that."

"And hit the water," the gunner says contemptuously. "What the hell's the good of doing that?"

"You keeps on hitting the water," Doolittle says earnestly. "Hit it as often as you can throw shells. Then the submarine reckons it's safe to come closer. And bang! you lets him have it!"

A light that ain't natural comes over the gunner's face. He stoops over the gunsight and I see where the excitement's gone out of his toes. He breathes hard and depresses the gun muzzle. The shot hits the water short of the submarine and splashes like a fountain. The Nazis answer with a salvo that sets us on fire. One shell takes us below the waterline and I hear the engineers start up the main bilge pump. The big jumbo derrick at No. 2 jumps from its crutch and bangs on the foredeck. A ventilator abaft the deck house crumples like it was a bit of paper.



WE'RE under a regular barrage but the gunner don't even look up. He's got his eye tight against the rubber shield of the telescopic sight and he's throwing shells into the water between the submarine and ourselves like his life depends on it.

Meanwhile the submarine is edging in

closer. Through my glasses I catches sight of a glint of brass buttons and the gleam of gold braid and I knows there's a hard-faced Nazi behind them. Further aft more hard-faced men is gathered in a knot watching the shelling of what they think is a helpless ship what can't hit back. Then the submarine's gun goes silent and I sees a swirl of water at her bow.

Doolittle breaks away from the line passing ammunition to the gun and nudges the gunner.

"Closing in for the kill," he says. "Nazis is mugs. Also, they's fanatics. They could stay off there and sink us without trouble; but the training they've had in efficiency won't let 'em. They has to come closer. Just plain mugs."

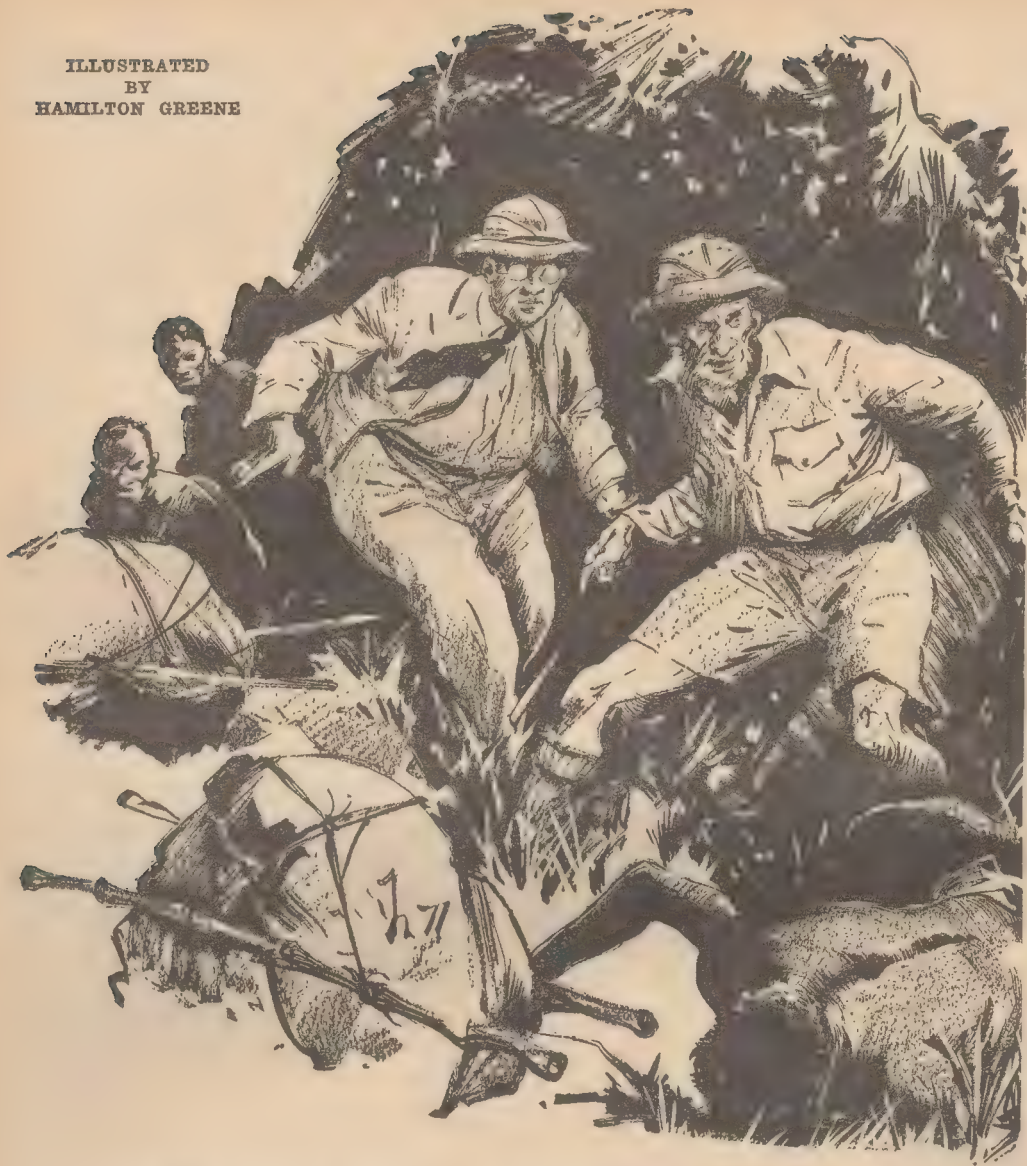
The R.N.R. man straightens himself for one look. When he bends down again I sees the muzzle of the four-inch rise a little. For maybe ten seconds there's a breathless silence over the ship. Then *wham!* and the gunner lets the U-boat have it. One, two, three. I count the shells as they scream from the muzzle. The first one catches the submarine square in the conning tower and kicks a mess of splinters into the air. The second sweeps the knot of hard-faced men into the sea, while the third hits home on the hull. The flat stern of the U-boat disappears in a swirl of water. Her ugly bow rises in the air and hangs for a moment like it's been knocked silly. A smear of oil blackens the surface of the sea. Then the U-boat rolls on its side and sinks out of sight.

The gunner straightens himself slowly. "Struth!" he says, shaking hands solemnly with Doolittle. "Struth!" Then he turns and looks at the north where a four-stacker, attracted by the firing, is racing toward us. Three planes are circling and dipping over her. Up on the bridge, Captain Barnes flaps them a signal and we see they're Americans.

Doolittle points at one of the planes. "See that different-looking tail assembly?" he says, and whips out a sheet of paper. "I'll make a drawing of it. Then next time we see one we'll know it's American. Knowing things like that comes in handy sometimes."

"You telling me!" I says. And this time I ain't kidding him.

ILLUSTRATED
BY
HAMILTON GREENE



JUNGLE JEOPARDY

A Trader Leeds Novelette

By BRIAN O'BRIEN

FRANK POTTAGE, beachmaster of James Colt, African Merchants, Duala, glanced significantly at Hope, the American missionary, as angry footsteps stamped up the veranda stairs.

Outside the drawn mats the sun boiled

down on whitewashed store buildings. Hibiscus blossoms were motionless scarlet blobs against their green hedges, the river was a wide, burnished, glaring sheet on which two destroyers, one British, the other French, floated like black paper cut-

Bacher stood above a naked Bulu who writhed, bleeding and crying out under the lash of a viciously twisted strip of elephant hide.



outs. A few canoes crawled over the glassy surface and turned languidly in to the trading beaches. Somewhere below the veranda the hollow tock-tock of a cooper's maul seemed but to punctuate the sweltering heat, and over all was the hot spicy reek of palm oil.

"Gratitood, they calls it!" howled an outraged voice as Mr. Charles Leeds marched onto the veranda. "After all I done fer 'em, too!"

"Sit down, Charlie," said Hope gently. "Sit down and cool off. Have a—wet."

"Wot?" the old man turned bloodshot

blue eyes on the missionary. "Yew, yew awsk me ter 'ave a drink? 'Ere, 'Ope," he said suspiciously, "wot d'yew know abaht this?"

"Not much, Charlie. I heard the authorities want you to go home for a sort of furlough."

"'Ome! 'Ome, 'e sez," snorted the wizened little man, dropping into a chair. With shaking hands he shoved a helmet off his sweating, bald head and pushed a battered pipe between bearded and toothless jaws. "My 'ome's 'ere, ain't it? 'Oo the 'ell wants me in England? I don't

know no one there. I wants ter git back ter me own 'ome, an' that's me river."

"Well, didn't you tell 'em that?" Pottage asked, his long, pallid face sympathetic.

He liked the peppery little man; he'd known him for years as an almost legendary figure along the Campo River on the southern border of Cameroons. He was thin as a rack of bones; his knobby knees stuck out from khaki shorts like the boles of ancient and weatherbeaten trees. Soccer stockings wrinkled about his skinny legs and enormous marching boots fidgeted with anger.

"Tell 'em? 'Course I did. Thirty year I bin with the Bulus. It's me 'ome; I ain't got nothink anywheres else, I ain't. I gotta go 'ome ter me Bulus.

"Complaints, they sez," he went on. "That there oily bastid from London—Hem Pee, 'e calls hisself. Complaints from Muni, 'e sez. I risks me neck gettin' a passel o' diamonds, worth I dunno 'ow much, all the w'y from the Campo to 'ere* an' nah they won't lemme go back. I leaves orl me business ter go ter pot, an' wot thenks do I git? Go 'ome, they sez, an' leckshure on 'ow yer brought the di'monds ter Duala. Mc, leckshurin' ter a mob o' bleedin' school teachers! Go 'ome, they sez, an' 'ave a bit of a rest. My 'ome's dahn by me river. Oh, I tol' 'em! I refused ter go, I did, an' wot'jer think they said? That there oily-ficed politician sez, 'e sez, the country's under martial lor, 'e sez, an' I gotter do as I'm told.

"Complaints from Muni, 'e sez. They complains I poached ivory across their bleedin' border. They cawn't prove it," declared the furious little trader, "they ain't never been inside their bleedin' coast. I h'interfered with border tride, 'e sez. Jes' becawse I won't let me Bulus be swindled by their crawlin' peddlers. I looks arter tride along my river. I h'obstrucks native h'enterprise, 'e sez. This 'ere milk-ficed dandy from 'ome sez we gotta keep on good terms with our neighbors. They wants me aw'y from their bleedin' border, an' so I gotter go."

He stared wretchedly at the floor.

"Wot'll 'appen ter me Bulus?" he muttered.

"They'll let you go back after the war,

Charlie," Pottage tried to offer comfort.

"Arter the war," snorted the old man. "Arter the war me Bulus'll be messed ter 'ell an' gone by some piddlin' politician wot don't understand 'em. They'll git in trouble withaht me ter look arter 'em.



"GAWD dammit! I took 'em through the larst war, didn't I?" He wheeled to the table, snatched a bottle of gin and poured himself a mighty drink.

"Ter 'ell with the lot of 'em, politicians, sojers an' all," he snarled, and downed it.

Hope stirred, unhappily, mopping his perspiring face.

"Wot's ter 'appen ter Sala?" mumbled Leeds faintly. "Yew knows Sala. 'Ope, I've 'ad 'im fer nearly thirty year. 'E'll be a bleedin' coast boy, thet's wot. Why, on'y this mornin' I cops 'im wearin' trahsies, I did." He retired into another drink.

Suddenly he slammed the glass down.

"Know wot I'm goin' ter do? I'm goin' aht an' git blazin' roarin' drunk, I am. An' then I'm goin' up ter thet bleedin' Pally Justice an' I'm goin' rahnd thet bleddy politician like a cooper rahnd a bleedin' cawsk. And don't neither of yew two try ter stop me." He crammed the helmet over his head and stumped out.

"He hasn't been home since he first came out, has he?" Pottage asked.

"No. It's a darned shame," said the missionary. "Poor little guy's heart-broken. You know what'll happen to him if they try to send him home?"

"Yes, I do. I've seen it happen before when an old coaster's tried to get back to cooler places. He'll die aboard ship between Sierra Leone and the Islands and they'll drop him overside. That stretch of water isn't called the Boneyard for nothing."

"Right." Hope shuffled his large feet. "Well, I'd better get up to the Palais Justice. If Leeds goes in there drunk he's liable to get himself into trouble."

The missionary heaved himself out of his seat, reached for his hat and jacket and stepped outside.

He walked past the smelly, noisy market place, past British and French sailors strolling slowly through the sweltering heat, and climbed the tree-lined hill to the

*Diamonds to Duala. *Adventure*, May, 1943.

cliff on which the government buildings are situated. In ten minutes he had entered the stained stucco gateway of the Palais de Justice, acknowledged the salute of a Senegalese guard and mounted the oil-stained staircase to a conference room.

Through the solid door he could hear the monotonous drone of a cultured but pompous voice.

"What they need out here—" the man was saying as Hope tapped the door, "oh, come in."

Hope entered.

About a long bare table were seated a navy captain, two army officers, a Free French political officer, and at the head, a tall, scarlet-faced heavy man with tight white ducks. Heavy, soft hands were poised for a gesture that was ruined by the necessity for scratching prickly heat. The heavy man turned lofty brown eyes on the missionary.

"Afternoon, Mr. Hope," said the navy officer.

The rest of the officials nodded cordially.

"Permit me to introduce Sir Hengist Thomson."

"American, hey?" queried the baronet, nodding curtly. "Missionary, what?" The tone managed to convey some disapproval.

"Yes." Hope accepted a seat offered by one of the Frenchmen. "I've called about Charles Leeds."

"Oh, Leeds, Leeds, yes. Excellent man," intoned Sir Hengist. "Good fellow, no doubt. But an inflammatory type, y'know. Too excitable. Flies off the handle. Have to send him home. Pity."

"His home is on the Campo River," said Hope quietly.

"Nonsense," puffed the politico. "Ridiculous. Won't wait for orders. Need a more—er—diplomatic type on the border."

"You won't—"

"Sorry, cawn't hear of it."

"But he's done good work. He'll die if you send him home, sir." Hope leaned forward earnestly. "He has no home but among the Bulus. D'you know what that means? They need him too."

Sir Hengist permitted himself an artful smile.

"Why do you intercede for him, Mr.—Hope? I understand he won't allow your mission to operate in his territory."

"That's true," Hope admitted. "He thinks his people are happier without my—teaching. Maybe he's right. You learn a lot of strange things in this country. Have you been down into the Big Bush?"

"What? No, 'course not. Don't need to. Hunted a bit in British East, though. All natives the same."

"Did you know the French never needed an administrator in that territory while he was there?"

The French officials nodded confirmation.

"This is war," said Sir Hengist pontifically.

"Did you know that Charlie Leeds took his Bulus through the last war?" Hope fired at him. "D'you know that if he is sent away you'll have trouble with them? D'you know that right at this minute they're squatting around their signal drums waiting to know when he's coming back to them? D'you know they call him their father and mother?"

"And how long have you known this—er—paladin?" inquired the great man glancing around the table for approval. His face *was* getting a little redder.

"I met him in Kribi. Back in nineteen thirteen, that was. I was a green hand then. . . ."



IN those days Kribi was a bustling little port that consisted of a long row of trade factories and bungalows facing the lagoon across which was the native town. Every morning a long line of up-country natives strode into the town walking delicately on the hard clay road, their quiet eyes studying the white men's wonders. At the end of the street near the beach was the American Mission bungalow and not far from it the bark and palm-leaf church.

Hope had been out a year, just stationed at Kribi and fresh from the mission school up near Ebolowa.

Hope was a large, plump man of twenty-five. Big glasses glimmered on his red, clean-shaven face. Earnest, he trekked regularly into the bush villages, enduring endless hardships while he strove to learn

the language and manners of the quiet natives. His wife, Eleanor, worked patiently among the town women, aiding them in their household problems and teaching the mission scholars.

Most of the traders were Germans, although a couple of old established English firms still maintained their factories. The town was policed by an ill-tempered German lieutenant named Bacher. He was the typical Prussian under-officer newly promoted. Buttoned tightly into his white tunic he strode the roads flicking his polished boots with a heavy, twisted hide bulala with which he never hesitated to slash any native who was too ignorant to salute him properly. His police were stiff replicas of himself; men from Yaunde, strangers to the local natives, haughty and brutal to them, insolent to the whites, but terrified of Bacher who, in turn, was equally terrified of Von Hagen, the military governor at Ebolowa, seven days' trek to the east.

One morning a battered little Younger Dempsey steamer, the *Elabi*, came to anchor off Kribi. Her single black funnel poisoned the cool air off shore and lighters and canoes were soon cluttered along her bilge like suckling pigs. Her winches clanked and spurted steam as she discharged salt, brass and tobacco.

Hope saw a few pale-faced sailors roaming the town in search of beer and women, but wisely ignored them. His own men were keeping the mission girls out of the way.

There was a sort of saloon in one of the factories. It was run by a greasy, obese Bavarian named Woerrman, who, it was suspected, paid a fee to Bacher for selling gin to natives.

In two days the *Elabi* was discharged and taking in ebony, palm oil, kernels and cocoa.

Hope had been down to Grand Batanga, a mission outstation eight miles down the coast. Cycling over a bridge that spanned a stream above the lagoon, he heard the tinny planging of a gramophone in Woerrman's place. Whites amusing themselves, he thought, wheeling down the slope to his bungalow.

"Hallo, dear," he greeted his fresh-faced wife.

It would be a year before she lost that

fine color and became sallow like most white women in Africa.

He allowed her to take his jacket and went into the back room to undress. Then he stood in a concrete-lined depression while his Bulu servant stood on its roof pouring water through a home-made shower that was a gasoline can punched with nail holes.

He returned to a meal of goat, boiled paw-paw, yams and sweet corn from the mission garden.

After dinner he liked to sit on a narrow porch in the cool of the evening, listening to the soothing boom of surf and the delicate tinkle of mouth harps from the factory watchmen.



ELEANOR joined him and they rested in deep content, watching the lights of the *Elabi* three miles off shore

Suddenly there were shouts up the street.

"What can that be?" Eleanor asked.

A few natives ran, laughing, across the bridge and disappeared in the tangle of native huts. They heard the harsh bellowing of Bacher and the jangle of argument.

"Trouble with sailors, I'm afraid." He wagged a rueful head.

Then a shot ripped the quiet air.

"You'd better go in, dear," he said quietly. "I'll go and see what's up."

He stepped into the road. Dark figures ran toward him. There were three of them, arguing as they pounded down the slope. Then they saw him, hesitated, and one ducked into a clump of bananas beside the road. The others tore past Hope and he saw them cast off a small boat and row out toward the *Elabi*.

Two native police, bawling commands, ran down. One halted opposite him.

"Where white man go?" he snapped.

It had for years been a thorn in the side of the German administration that the only language the natives spoke besides their own was a sort of pidgin English.

Hope stared at the man, a brawny, sweating, scar-faced Yaunde with the small, glittering eyes of a gorilla.

"Which side white man?" he roared, raising his club.

"Put that club down or I'll take it from

you," snapped Hope, not giving an inch.

The policeman growled something and ran off.

Hope went into the bungalow.

"Some brawl at Woerrman's place," he told Eleanor. "Bacher throwing his weight as usual, I guess. Let's turn in, dear."

Before they slept that night they heard shouting outside and once more a shot.

"Hope that Dutchman hasn't hurt anybody," he muttered uneasily. "He's a nasty one with strangers."

In the morning Hope arose in time to see the *Elabi* steaming south, already hull down on the brilliant horizon. He went into the bath house stripping off his pajamas.

"Mornin', guv'nor."

"What?" He stared at a small, thin-faced man with a nasty gash across his forehead spoiling an impish grin. He was crouching in a corner, bareheaded and dressed in faded dungarees with a once-white shirt tucked into them. Broken-down shoes covered bare feet.

"'Ope I ain't disturbed yer, mate," said the little man, standing up. He didn't come to Hope's shoulder. "In a bit o' trouble, I am. 'Ad a bit of a palaver with the p'lice lawst night."

"But you're hurt. Who—"

"Nah, that ain't nuthin'." The little man grinned, revealing rather bad teeth. "Yer oughter see that copper's h'eye."

"Who are you talking to, dear?" Eleanor looked into the bath house. "Oh—"

"Blime!" gasped the stranger. "I didn't know there was a lidy 'ere. Beggin' yer pawdon fer the h'intrusion, ma'am. I'll be gettin' along."

"Wait a minute." She looked at him a moment, then smiled. "You've hurt yourself. Bring him in, dear. I'll get a bandage."

"You come with me," Hope said grimly, struggling into his pajamas. "I want to know what's been going on."

The little cockney stepped carefully after him, staring at clean mats, polished tables and the few pictures on the white-painted walls. He rubbed his calloused hands on his trousers.

"Sit down, Mr.—" Eleanor said, bustling in with bowl of water and strips of cloth.

"Leeds, ma'am, Charlie Leeds," chirped the man. "Nah don't put yerself aht on account o' me. I gotta be gettin' along—"

"Where?" asked Hope, pressing him into a chair.

Eleanor washed the ugly gash in his forehead and strapped the edges together with adhesive tape. Then she wrapped a bandage about the bony head.

"Now go and wash up," she directed. "Breakfast will be ready in ten minutes."

Leeds stared at her.

"Me?" he whispered.

"Yes," she smiled. "Hurry up."

CHAPTER II

FUGITIVE'S FLIGHT



HOPE led him back to the bath house; showered and left Leeds while he went to dress. He came out soon, clean and smiling. Hope thought he looked like a terrier.

He ate ravenously but carefully, crooking a genteel little finger while he sipped noisily at his coffee. When he had finished he sighed, pushed back his chair and sat politely, waiting.

"Well, what happened?" Hope asked.

"It's like this 'ere," he answered promptly. "We was up ter the trader's 'avin' a bit of a wet, see? The gramophone was goin' and the boys wanted ter 'ave a bit of dawnce, like. There was three of us from the *Elabi*, an' a lot of German blokes. That fat Woerrman sent aht fer some gels.

"Well, they 'adn't bin there ten minutes afore that copper comes in, all dressed up like a fourp'ny rabbit, with a sword an' gun an' everythink. Seems like I was dawncin' with a gel he's took a fawncy to, see? 'E ruffles up like a bleedin' pigeon, and h'orders, h'orders me, h'if yer please, ter un'and that there gel. I tells 'im orf proper. I'm a h'Englishman, an' I don't tike h'orders from no 'Un copper. 'Sides, I weren't doin' no 'arm.

"Upshot was that 'e draws 'is bleedin' sword an' 'its me acrost the napper with it. Blime, I got me 'air orf, proper. I drops the gel an' lets 'im 'ave me right, right in 'is eye. But wot I didn't know was that copper was the chief o' p'lice. The other blokes yells, Cheese it! an' we



"Yus, 'e tried ter kill me, 'e did. But I lets 'im 'ave a boot in the wes-kit an' then I 'ops it."

bolts. But that copper ain't no fool. He trips me h'up an' dahn I goes. Then he gits ter 'is feet an' lugs aht that pistol. 'E gits time fer one shot. Yus, 'e tried ter kill me. But I lets 'im 'ave a boot in the weskit an' then I 'ops it.

"Well, we spots you in the dark an' I thinks it's another copper. So I ducks inter the bushes so me mates wouldn't be mixed up with the trouble. Didn't dare try ter git back ter the ship, 'cos that bloke 'ad the beach watched. Climbed over the wall inter that there bawthroom o' yours an—well, there yer fahnd me."

"Quite an evening," commented Hope. "What are you going to do now?"

"Oh, I'll be orl right. I'll jes' lie low, h'if yer don't mind, 'til dark and then I'll make a break fer the bush. I missed me ship, so I'll kick abaht 'til I can mike me own way."

"If Bacher catches you—Bacher is the police officer—if he catches you, you'll go to jail. He'll have you flogged like as not."

"Im?" scoffed Leeds. "I'll go rahnd 'im like a cooper rahnd a bleedin' cawsk."

'Sides, 'e's got ter cop me fust," he said.

"He's a nasty man," said Eleanor.

"If you hit him before witnesses," Hope said gravely, "he won't rest until he's had revenge for it. He can arrest you for jumping ship, you know, and he'll swear you attacked him."

Leeds stood up, hoisted his slacks and grinned.

"It was kind o' you and the lidy ter tie up me 'ead an' give me that nice brekfust. But I better me movin' along, nah. That copper'll mike trouble for yer if 'e cops me 'ere."

"You sit down," said Hope firmly. "He won't come here. Make yourself comfortable. I've got to think of something."

He glanced at Eleanor, who was busy-ing herself clearing the table.

"Of course we can't let him go," she said. "Heaven knows I want to be a good Christian and obey the law." She looked severely at the little sailor. "You've been very bad, fighting and drinking," she scolded. "But we can't let that Bacher have you. You stay here until your head gets better, then we'll see."

"Better tell the houseboys to keep quiet," Hope suggested.

"I've already done that," she said serenely.

"Well!"

"Yes, Sam Hope, I've noticed that there are times when you would rather keep quiet than sing a psalm. I'd be a poor missionary if I couldn't do the same."

"Eleanor," Hope said, "you are a wonderful woman."

"That's the trewth, so 'elp me, amen."

"Never mind that," she said, blushing a little. "The problem is, what are you going to do?"

"Don't worry abaht me, ma'am," he smiled. "I kin get on ennywhere. I've done everything; mined silver in Mexico. I've worked in yore country too; 'Udson Chewbs in Noo Yawk. Useter be a engineer, I did, once."

"You've never been in this country, though," Hope told him. "A white man is conspicuous in the Big Bush. The natives have signal drums and they pass on news quick as wireless. Bacher would know where you are every minute."

"Well, I'll go somewhere where 'e ain't got the say-so."

"That's right. But meanwhile you stay here. I'll go and see what's going on." He reached for his helmet and walked out.



THE wide street was quiet in the early morning. A cool wind rustled coconut palms. Natives with headloads of palm kernels marched gracefully down the line of trade factories. White men inside called them to bring their produce, then haggled for trashy trade goods. A few curly-tailed dogs sniffed at spilled oil and farther up the hill one of Bacher's police was helping himself from the head load of an up-country native.

Hope strolled past the factories calling greetings. He stopped at Woerrman's. Inside, the fat Bavarian, dough-faced and bleared of eye, was scratching himself in the cool darkness. A languid half-caste displayed bolts of cotton print to an eager native. There was a stench of stale beer and gin.

"Morning," Hope said, stepping inside the wide door.

Woerrman grunted. He didn't like the missionary, who had interfered to a large extent with his sale of trade gin to the natives. There had been a nasty argument too, over a comely Bulu girl Woerrman had tried to lure to his veranda.

Hope bought a few tins of sardines and watched the native clerk cheating his customer. He met Woerrman's defiant glare.

"Had a bit of trouble last night, I heard."

"Ja. Dose *verdammte* sailors! Englander again. Always Englander. They always trouble make. I giff quiet business; all dey want for fair brices. Bud dey guarrel und fight make. Dey haff no *kultur*. They think they own the whole world." He puffed indignantly. "But," he said, a fat, sausage-like finger wagging in Hope's face, "soon a time will come. Soon they will lessons take."

"What happened?" Hope stepped back from a foul blast of breath.

"Dis *schwein*. He iss dancing wid a girl, a dirty native woman. Noise making, shoudings. Lieutenant Bacher comes to ask him quietly to make quiet. Dis Englander, dis *schwein*, addack him with clubs and bottles throw and kig the lieutenant."

"So, did he get away?" Hope inquired.

"Ja, the coward run away. Dree of them they run bag to their dirty shib. And Bacher gannot go aboard for the shib iss Englander. She sail dis morning. Bud Bacher will catch that man. Oh, yess, Bacher iss no fool. He will waid, waid until der *Elabi* gomes nord and then that Englander will come ashore again. Oh, yess, Bacher will mage him sweat."

Woerrman sweated himself, mouth loose with anticipation at the thought of Bacher's revenge.

"Where is the ship gone?"

"How I know? Bud Bacher, he will—" Suddenly the slippery little eyes swiveled past Hope and slitted into obsequious smirking.

"*Gut Morgen, Herr Leutnant. Wie geht's?*"

Hope regarded the short, bull-necked officer who scowled offensively back. His round belly was buttoned tightly into a white tunic, white slacks were stuffed into polished black leggings. Ribbons decorated the straining chest and a belt supported a sword and black pistol holster. His face, mustached, scarlet and congested, was shaded by a wide helmet with a large brass badge.

"What are you doing here?" he rasped. "Not often do missionaries come to these factories. You batronize the Englanders nod the Cherman factories. You come to make trouble, no?"

"It's a free country—so far—isn't it?" Hope replied mildly.

"You will soon see. Soon we drive you Englanders—yess, *Amerikaners* too—oudt and then the blace will be clean again. Ach, everywhere I go I see Englander. Even the black swine speak nothing bud stoopid English. Und now Yankees; what you want?"

"I heard that someone punched you in the eye."

"You will move that stoopid grin from your face," roared Bacher.

"No, I can still smile." Hope was enjoying himself. "I can even laugh out loud. How did it happen?"

"I wass attacked by a drunken Englander. He struck when I wass not looking. He attempted murder. You waid until that dirty *Elabi* gomes back, I put him in irons 'til his bones rod. I charge

him with attempted murder. I show you peoples who rules this *verdammte* pest-land."

Hope moved out of the factory; he had learned all he needed. Bacher followed him.

"Why you are interested; *Herr* mission man?"

"I heard shots last night. Thought it might be serious."

"Serious!" bellowed the German. "You think it nodding that I am wounded?"

Deliberately Hope ducked his head and peered under the German's helmet brim. He certainly had a prime shiner.

"No, it doesn't look serious to me."

"So." Bacher breathed heavily and his heavy features seemed to grow mottled with rage. "You take care, mission man. You are nuisance here. You interfere too much with these swine natives. Take care I do not throw you oudt of the country."

"You aren't big enough to move me, Bacher," Hope told him evenly. "Neither you nor anything you represent. I am here to do a greater work than yours and you will not stop me."

He walked past the German as if he'd been invisible. He heard Bacher spit after him as he walked back to his bungalow.



THERE was a sound of tapping as he entered. Eleanor chatted and he made out Leeds' cheery replies. The little cockney was sitting on the floor riveting the broken handle onto a saucepan, his ever-present pipe in his mouth.

"Likes ter mike meself useful," he explained. "Well, 'ow's me pal the copper?"

"He's got an eye like a black fig," Hope said, "if that's any comfort. But he's charging you with attempted murder."

"Wot? Arter 'im tryin' ter slice me napper orf wi' that there sword? 'E's got 'is nerve. 'Sides, I got witnesses."

"Those Germans won't dare go against his story. And their words will be taken before those of your friends."

"Cawn't get me pals mixed up in this," Leeds said definitely. "An' look 'ere—you'll git inter trouble aiding an' abettin' if 'e cops me 'ere."

"We'll be all right. Just lie low for a few days."

The rest of that day Leeds was very quiet. He accepted a pair of walking shoes that were too big for Eleanor. A khaki shirt and shorts made him feel "ridic'ous," he said as he surveyed his bony knees. But a pair of leather gaiters improved his spirits. Eleanor gave him an old helmet which he padded with paper, tried on and examined himself in a mirror.

"Doctor Leeds, I presoom." He bowed to his reflection.

He asked many questions about the natives and appeared interested in the mission trails across the Big Bush.

At dinner that night he began to eat just as Hope was preparing to say grace, but hid his scarlet face in his hands in abject shame until flustered conversation from Eleanor reassured him.

Later Hope put up a camp cot and spread it with sheets and a blanket.

"Blime," muttered Leeds. "Ain't slept between sheets since I dunno when."

"Where's your home?" Eleanor asked.

"Where me 'at is," he replied promptly.

"No—people?"

"Nah. Me muvver died when I was a kid. Me ole man was a sojer in India; 'e got killed too. I bin on me own since—well, a long time."

Eleanor turned her head. Hope eyed the little man. He wasn't more than five feet three, thin, wiry as whipcord, with dogged courage in his blue eyes. His mouth was tight and his chin bony but firm. He had the look of a dog that has been kicked about too much; a dog who will fight anything but would rather be friendly.

"Well," he said, "good night, Charlie. Sleep tight."

"Good night, Charlie."

"Blime!" gulped Leeds. "Goo'night, 'Ope an' Missus 'Ope. An', well—Gor-blessyer!"

They retired to their room and heard Leeds stirring like a small animal making himself comfortable.

"What can we do for him?" Eleanor whispered.

"I'll get him down to Batanga in a few days," Hope whispered. "Old Majola will get a canoe and run him down coast to Bata. There's a consul there and he'll put him on a homewardbound ship."

Eleanor sighed.

He padded the old helmet with paper and examined his reflection in the mirror. "Doctor Leeds, I presoom."



"What is it, honey?" her husband asked.

"It seems that that poor little man has been passed on too much. I wish we could give him a decent home."

"Then Bacher'd get him. Besides," Hope chuckled in the darkness, "I don't think Charlie Leeds would settle easily. He'll make out. We've got to get him out of Bacher's hands, that's all." He chuckled again. "Wonder what the Board would say if they knew we were aiding a criminal to escape?"

"He's not a criminal," Eleanor said indignantly.

Hope fell asleep promptly but his wife lay long watching the stars through the mosquito net.

They were awakened by a houseboy with tea.

"The *n'tangan* has gone," he said in soft Bulu.

Hope ducked through the net.

"Where?"

"We do not know, master. In the night he went away and no man heard him."

Hope muttered a word his wife would not have approved and padded out into the living room.

The camp cot was undisturbed. He reached for a scrap of paper on the pillow and read:

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Hope:

Hoping you are in the best of spirrits. I have gon away becaws I think my being here will make trouble. Thanking you very much for the kind gifts of helmit and shirt and shews and shorts and leggins.

I remain, your Faithfully

Charles Leeds.

P. S.—I will get in touch with you as soon as settled. C. L.

P. P. S.—Tell that German copper to try a British beefsteak on his fat eye. C. L.

CHAPTER III

WAR!



IT was almost a year after Leeds went off into the bush—and the Hopes had heard no news of him—that war broke out. The natives knew it first. One of the mission boys presented himself at Hope's door, his rugged features puzzled. "Which palaver catch white men?" he queried.

"What d'you mean, N'gojo?"

"All white men fight. Englisi, Franchi, Germani, all men. Kill plenty. Drum talk say this thing."

That evening Bacher confirmed the news.

"It iss *der Tag!*" he bellowed. "For this we haff waited. Now you will see, you Yankees. You will shtop in your house until I giff permission to move, or you will to prigon go with those *schweinen Englandern.*"

"But I'm American, we're neutral!"

"*Machts nichts!*"

Hope heard that the English traders

were in jail. After some days he was allowed to visit them. They were half starved and ill treated by Bacher's guards.

"Just wait," he yelled at them. "Soon our glorious navy will be here and you will be shot, dogs!"

Hope requested permission to visit the outlying villages.

"This isn't their war," he pleaded. "How can they understand? How can we explain that whites are fighting when we won't let them fight?"

"They are Cherman subjects," Bacher stormed. "They will fight if I order it."

Then came the news that Duala had fallen and that the German troops and traders had retreated, taking their goods with them, to the east.

Bacher lost some of his bombastic attitude. But his police patrolled the outlying roads arresting and beating any native who could not account for himself. And morning after morning Hope found broken, wounded natives lying silent and terrified on the blood-soaked sand outside his bungalow. Eleanor turned the school room into a hospital and bullied her girls to make them bring water and food to the bewildered natives.

And the dull report of guns was heard up the coast. Bacher prowled the town like a mad dog, fear making him jumpy and dangerous.

Then shells screamed over Kribi and exploded in the forest. Natives moaned and screamed outside the mission house and their dead and wounded lay dumb as butchered cattle.

"Fire comes from the sky and our towns are blazing," faltered an old chief.

Bacher strode among them slashing them back from his stamping feet.

"You have communicated with the enemy," he panted. "You are spy!"

"Don't talk rot," Hope snapped. "They're shelling all along the coast. I'm under fire too, remember."

All that day shells whined overhead and exploded in the coast towns. Where they came from, no one knew. A battleship lay over the horizon, Hope figured. Eleanor was calm, but her eyes were bright with fear.

"What can we do?" she asked quietly. "There are more wounded than we can even feed. We've got to get them away."

"What's that?" Hope shouted as a blast of flame lit up the windows.

It was Bacher firing the factories as he marched rapidly up the road to Ebolowa. Hope raced to the prison, but a wounded native told him the English prisoners had been taken along.

The Hopes moved the wounded into factories gutted of their stores and worked like beavers among them. But the Bulus were panicky and children ran about deserted, crying and starving.



IT was the first of December, 1914, that a French contingent marched down the coast and entered Kribi without a shot being fired. Commandant Mathieu, a thin, fork-bearded soldier, presented himself at the Hope Bungalow and announced that the French and British flags would fly over what was left of the official buildings. Senegalese troops sauntered about the native town fraternizing with the scared Bulus.

Hope wanted to take them back to their towns, but Mathieu forbade it.

"German troops are everywhere," he told him. "Mostly Yaunde levies. They would chop any wandering natives they found. They have orders to kill anyone suspected of aiding us. I have come down through the old Edea road from Longyi. They have been there. It is not pretty."

"I'll go there and see what I can do," Hope said. "It is only eight miles up the coast."

"I advise against it," shrugged the marble-faced commandant.

Hope didn't get far. Leaving Eleanor caring for the refugees, he started up the beach. Less than a mile out of Kribi he was halted by a wailing mob of natives. He stared aghast.

Some were nursing atrocious wounds. Others crawled in the sand, their backs and bellies ripped by rawhide bulalas. Women, obscenely lacerated, moaned in agony. There were no young girls.

"They have killed us," groaned a chief. "They are strangers, devils, and they came to our towns and took our women. The young men they chopped and burned and the girls they have taken away. We have no place to go. Is this the fashion of the white men's gods?"

Hope flushed through the sunburn.

"It is the fashion of bad men but not gods," he told them. "Return to your towns. I will come, too."

"Nay, *n'tangan*. All towns on that side are burning. The Germani soldiers kill and spare not. Some men have run to Edea side. Others have gone into the sea. Our rivers are red and the crocodiles eat men."

They followed Hope to Kribi, and Eleanor had to make room for them. Fortunately Mathieu was able to give rations and the unfortunates ate.

The gunboat *Surprise* rode at anchor off the beach acting as guard ship. So Kribi was safe for the moment.

Hope decided to evacuate some of the natives—those who could walk—to the outstation at Grand Batanga.

Then the *Surprise* was relieved by a Nigerian Government armed yacht, the *Ivy*, and Mathieu took his company up the Lolodorf road to clear out some guerrilla bands that were harrying the natives there.

But there must have been enemy agents in the port. For the next day Kribi was attacked from the east. Small-caliber shells crashed into the native town and the *Ivy* pumped shrapnel from her twelve-pounder into the bush beyond the north beach. Mathieu force-marched his men to the town and drove back the attacking column.

But the town natives were wild with panic. Some broke into and looted the stores and raced down country with their spoil. A group of them were taken two miles outside Kribi, robbed and butchered by a wandering band of German pressed troops under a Yaunde sergeant.

Hope rode between Kribi and Grand Batanga trying to keep the refugees from running amok with fear. Twice Batanga was attacked and natives taken off as carriers. Old Majola, the chief, mourned that all his spears had been taken to arm the levies.

"They burn our towns and take our women," he stated. "They say it is the white man's order. What have we done to anger the whites? They have told us it is wrong to fight. Yet they fight us and kill us. What manner of law is the white man's law?" He stared with troubled eyes at the missionary. "My men are not afraid," he stated. "It is better that

we arm and fight these wicked people."

"No," Hope answered him. "Do not fight them, for they are many. They will kill and burn every man among you. Wait and soon these bad white men will be driven away. Then you can go back and man your towns and grow your cocoa."

"How can I believe the whites?" wailed the old man.

And Hope cursed in his heart because he did not know.



MATHIEU was waiting when he got back to Kribi.

"Your missionaries have arrived from the Ebolowa station," he reported. "We have sent escorts for all the outstation missionaries. You must leave the country. You are neutrals and, well, you embarrass us. The tug, *Remus*, will be here in a few days; prepare to evacuate your household to Spanish Muni."

"Wait a minute," Hope gasped. "Who's going to look after the wounded, the refugees? They have no place to go."

"We shall establish refugee stations for them," said the tired-looking Frenchman. "You can't stop here, that is final. Please do not make difficulty."

Hope went to the station and found over forty missionaries, some gay at the prospect of leave, others grim at the tragedy left behind them.

"It will take us years to wipe this out," said Doctor Good. "All the confidence they had in us must be gone. How can we expect these child-like pagans to believe a word we tell them? How can they believe that our God is good?"

"I'm staying," Hope said to Eleanor that night, after all the missionaries had been settled. "Someone's got to go among the Bulus to let them know they aren't deserted by their friends. You go down coast with the others and I'll join you when this is over."

Eleanor made surprisingly little trouble. She wept for a while and prayed most of that night.

"You are right, of course, Sam," she said next morning. "You can travel better without me. I don't want you to stay, but I know you must. I'll be good, I won't make it more difficult for you. But

do get news to me as often as you can."

It was a week before the tug crowded with refugees rolled off down the coast. Hope looked over the Batanga station. The bungalows were empty and already looted. There were shell holes in the soft ground. Majola's village was empty, the natives hiding out like animals in the bush. Off shore a low, gray shape patrolled the horizon, blockading against the convoys of supplies that came up from Spanish Muni for the Germans. Hope wondered why they should risk their neutrality brazenly to supply arms and ammunition to a belligerent. But Hope's knowledge of war and its attendant skull-duggery was limited indeed.

With Mathieu's permission he took N'gojo, his Bulu houseboy, and started southeast. He slept at night in a deserted hut, ate a plantain he found and trekked on searching for a native deacon who could help get the people together. Once he came upon the remains of a camp in the forest. There was blood and what looked like a grave. Twice he heard the rattle of rifle fire far off, went toward it, but found nothing but stripped corpses. And all about him as he moved was the nervous rustle of frightened things. The forest was dripping now with the rains and through it was an unhealthy fever-laden miasma. He had the feeling that he was being followed, but though he turned often he saw nothing.

One dawn he heard the mutter of a signal drum. N'gojo cocked his head to one side, listening.

"Many men have died," he said. "Many more are dying. Bad men with guns take young men and girls."

"Where are they?"

"At the town of Afak. White men are there. They have killed the chief and given his women to soldiers."

"We will go there."

It was perhaps fortunate that Hope did not catch up with the Germans at Afak. He found a burned church there and the stinking corpses of twenty-four murdered Bulus. Some had been shot, others speared. Women had been split open like figs.

"Wah," muttered N'gojo, gray-faced. "Better you take gun."

"I do not use a gun," Hope told him.

They marched on. Hope was dirty now and unshaven. He stopped only for water. N'gojo dug roots and hunted plantains near the ruined villages.

Two nights out of Afak the drums talked again.

"White men and black men with guns march the Ambam road," translated N'gojo. "Leave your towns and hide in the bush lest they slay you. Then follow the men of the Silent Walker."

"What's that?" Hope demanded. "Silent Walker? Who is that man?"

"He is a friend of Bulus," N'gojo replied. "A white man who helps them."

"A Germani?"

revolver wildly into the implacable trees, barely missing Hope who crouched not five yards from him.

Then, too, there were dangers from animals. A herd of elephants stampeded past them, panicked by a burst of firing from meat-hungry levies. N'gojo, stumbling, would have been crushed to pulp had not Hope dragged him behind a massive cottonwood bole.

But every night the signal drums talked, reported enemy movement and called the Bulus to the Silent Walker.

"They say Franchi soldiers are at Oy-



A herd of elephants stampeded past, panicked by a burst of firing from meat-hungry levies.

"Nay, n'tangan."

"We will find this man."



IT WAS days of struggle through rain-soaked forest when Hope's worn shoes sank into black swamp. Nights when the party huddled together like sheep seeking warmth in the cold damp. Days wherein natives dressed in German uniforms passed them while they lay breathless, flat in the mud. And once a German officer, crazed with the forest, emptied a

em and march north," N'gojo told the missionary. "They are across the Campo River and seek to drive the Germani north."

They were not far from the river that marks the boundary between Cameroons and Spanish Muni. And next day Hope lay, shaking with fever, in a tangled thicket while N'gojo went into the town of Owila seeking news. It was dark when he returned.

"The white man is across the river," he reported. "A brother has told me. He

makes war against the Germani people and the Bulu people say he is a god. They fight when he gives the order. They have killed many Germani soldiers and taken their guns and their clothes."

"Damn him!" raved the missionary. "Who is this mad fool who brings the Bulus into white men's war? They will be killed by thousands. Go back this night," he ordered N'gojo, "and tell this white man I will talk with him. I follow."

"No need ter go ter all that trouble, 'Ope," said a soft voice.

"Who's that?" cried the sick man.

In the forest gloom a small figure stood close. Beyond him spear points picked up faint light gleams.

"Charlie Leeds, 'member? I sez I'll let yer know when I'm settled. Well, 'ere I am."

"Leeds!" stormed the missionary. "What are you doing? How dare you interfere with these people? Can't you leave them out of this—this murder?"

"Wait a minute, cully." The cockney's voice was deeper, surer than when he last had heard it. "These boys is me pals. Cawn't let me pals dahn. 'Ere, yore sick, yew are. Come along er me. I'll 'ave a bit o' tommy for yer."

Astounded to silence Hope allowed himself to be lifted to his feet and assisted through the forest by two husky spearmen. N'gojo, muttering nervously, trod at his heels.

Once the column halted as the liquid, descending scale of the brain-fever bird rang like a bell in the whispering darkness.

"Old 'ard." Leeds squatted on his heels and the spearmen allowed Hope to slump gently to the ground. "Un patrols somewhere."

It was half an hour before they moved on and a little later Hope felt himself lowered down a bank and into a canoe. They crossed the river. Two men picked up Hope and he drowsed as they carried him through impenetrable blackness. He heard soft orders, felt the warmth of a fire and found himself in a tent beside a small blaze.

He managed to sit up, conscious of a woefully aching head.

"Wot'll yer 'ave?" Leeds invited.

Hope stared at him with complete bewilderment. He wore a German-pattern helmet, shirt and shorts and bright leather field boots. Beside him was a good camp cot and folding chair. A table bore steaming soup, a tin of cabin bread and the most beautiful ham Hope had ever seen. Beyond it the firelight glinted on a full gin bottle.

"Where did you get it?" whispered the missionary.

Leeds winked.

"Eat 'earty."

Hope drank some soup with heavenly enjoyment. Some ham followed and he felt his fever leaving him.

"Drink this."

Leeds held a glass of gin under his nose. Hope hesitated, then with an inward apology to the Mission Board, swallowed it, and choked for two minutes.

"Don't touch it, usually," he gasped. "Fever—"

"Nothin' like it," Leeds said, downing a large peg.

"Look here—"

"Nah yer don't." Leeds bent and unlaced his ruined boots. "Yore 'avin' a bit o' shut-h'ye, you are. 'Appy dreams."

Hope was conscious of a blanket dropped across him and that was all.

CHAPTER IV

BULU GUERRILLAS



HE awakened at dawn. Through the tent opening he saw lean-tos against the trees and massive tangles of greenery cutting off all approaches. Many Bulus crouched about small cooking fires and beside every man was a bayoneted rifle.

As he roused himself Leeds stepped through the entrance. He was dark as an Indian, and bearded. His hair was getting thin and his face deeply lined. But there was a steady glint in his rather small blue eyes.

"Ow d'yer feel, 'Ope?"

"Better, thanks. Look here, what are you doing?"

"Fightin' a bit of a war," said Leeds lightly.

"But—"

"Lissen. These 'ere Bulus 'as bin kind

ter me," said the little man. "I come, acrost 'em a year ago. They give me a 'ut ter live in and fed me, they did. I even got a plantation; cocoa. They 'elped me start it and I 'elped them a bit, see? Leastways, I 'ad a plantation."

"Where?"

"Ekin, up the river a bit. But them dam' 'Uns got there an' burned the vilage an' killed most o' the Bulus. Think I was goin' ter stand by an' let 'em get away wi' that? *Not* bloody likely. *And* no apologies! I popped orf inter the bush, like I did in Kribi. I knows me way abaht the bush nah, so I took some o' me pals with me."

"But you're leading them to certain death."

"Lissen, 'Ope, you ain't seen much, if yer think that. Them Yaunde levies bin killin' like flies fer nuthink. I'm givin' 'em a bit o' their own back, see? Ain't doin' so bad, neither. Them bright boys over in Muni is sendin' bullets an' supplies over ter the 'Uns, see. Leastways they sends the stuff acrost the border. But it don't allus get ter the 'Uns." He jerked his pipe, pungent with native tobacco, towards the ham. "Tain't bad, wot?"

"No, but—"

"Wait. We ain't fightin' whites, yer know. The 'Uns is usin' Yaunde troops dahn 'ere. Them Yaundes is the ancient enemies o' these peaceful Bulus. See wot the artful blighters is doin'? Tryin' ter stir up all the old native wars, that's wot. Well, we ain't standin' ter be killed orf like rats, not without fightin' back. I'm a n'Englishman, I am, an' I gotta right ter fight fer the Bulus. I'm their ally in a manner o' speakin'."

"But you can't drag them into battle. They'll never have a chance."

"I ain't draggin' 'em. The 'Uns done that. They gotta perfect themselves against them levies or die."

Leeds' eyes were steady as ice.

"Lissen, 'Ope. You an' yer lidy done me a good turn once. I ain't never fergot it, see? But this is different. These Bulus is my responsibility. They're so mixed up nah with different talk from one an' another that they dunno whether they're on their 'eads or their backsides. The Germans told 'em they're swines. I tell

'em they're men. And they believe me. Nah yer want ter show 'em how ter be h'angels. I ain't 'avin' that; they ain't ready fer that, yet. They're pagans, an' 'appy as sich. Bein' h'angels won't 'elp 'em against the bleedin' 'eathens that's slaughterin' 'em."

"I'm neutral," Hope said. "If I went to the Germans and offered to be responsible for the Bulu people they'd not harm them."

"Garn!" scoffed Leeds. "The kind o' blokes wot 'ave charge o' them levies would cut their own grandma's froats fer a 'apenny. Anyways, I wouldn't let yer go, so there."

"You'd hold me against my will?"

"Yus, if I 'as ter. You stop along with me fer a few d'ys an' you'll see wot's wot. Don't try ter git aw'y, though, yer wouldn't lawst a n'our in this bush."

He went out and Hope saw him giving quiet orders to the Bulus, groups of whom snatched up their rifles and disappeared silently through the screen of dense undergrowth.

All that day men appeared, reported and went away. Leeds was absent until late afternoon. He entered the tent just at dusk, stamping water from his boots.

"Nice weather fer ducks," he observed. "Lissen."

A signal drum mumbled.

"Good," Leeds said after it had stopped. "There's a couple of gunboats at the mouth o' the river. That means the British is patrolin' there."

"How d'you know that? D'you mean to say you understand drum talk?"

"Course I do."

"Why man, we missionaries have been trying to do that for years; our fathers too. How did you manage?"

"Nothin' to it," Leeds answered, but Hope could see he was pleased. "Orl I done was ter savvy Bulu, fust. They was me pals, see, and these 'ere pagans, as you call 'em, are a damn sight more gentlemen than most whites, so they didn't keep no secrets from me. A pal's a pal to a savage." He turned to an old man crouching outside the tent. Beside him was a slotted wooden cylinder about two feet in diameter.

"O, *Kefe*, make drum talk that all is well in this place," he ordered.



THE man drew two palm stalks from the drum and started banging with them on the thin edges of the slots. The noise seemed to be many toned and punctuated in an irregular rhythm that tantalized Hope. He had heard it many times before. Always he had felt he was near an understanding of this mysterious method of communication. But again it baffled him.

"Wot d'yer mike of it?" Leeds asked, twinkling.

"Nothing," grunted Hope.

"Yer know it's called drum talk."

"Of course."

"Orlright! You've 'eard of kili talk?"

"That's the way they call to each other from distances too great to hear separate words."

"Right. They calls kili-kili-kili. But they changes the tone o' the words, an' they changes the—the tempo too."

"I know that," snapped the humiliated missionary. "It's like half pronounced words. The listener has to guess the meaning."

"Right ag'in," said Leeds triumphantly. "Well, the drums does the sime, see? They talks, see? They talks like the kili talk. They mikes 'alf words and you gotta listen fer that an' then yer 'as the meanin'."

"Good heavens," Hope burst out. "You've got it. I always thought it was a code."

"So t'is. They 'as code words that carries their meanin'; that's the 'ard part o' the business. Frinstance, if they sez, 'I got 'unger' that means a visitor's comin', 'cos food's the fust thing a visitor wants, ain't it?"

"Of course." Hope bristled with excitement.

"Wot if the drum sez, 'Cross 'is 'ands on 'is breast'?"

"They only do that to dead people."

"Right. That means that someone's dead. An' when the message is follered by the drum name yer know 'oo it is, savvy?"

"Drum name?"

"Yus. Ye've 'eard o' the Silent Walker, ain't yer?"

"Yes."

"They calls me that 'cos I don't make

no noise when I'm 'untin' 'Uns. Know wot yore's is, 'Ope?"

"No."

"If a woman he would be beautiful." Leeds said it in Bulu and Hope glared at giggling natives outside.

"They don't mean no 'arm," Leeds told him. "It's 'cos yer gettin' a bit plump, like. They likes their gels plump."

Hope sighed, scratching his whiskers.

"You certainly are the strangest man I ever met," he said. "You come here for a year and know more about the secret people of Africa than others who have studied them a lifetime."

"That's bec'os I don't look at 'em as 'eathens," Leeds said seriously. "They're *people* ter me, see? They're folks, as you Yanks sez. They got their likes an' dislikes. An' they're honest, see? Leastways, they're honest until they meets up with white men. It's tough, ain't it?"

"I think I see what you mean," Hope said slowly.

"Good. I got 'em organized, a bit, see? Guerrilla fighters, we are, like the Boer commandos they 'ad in South Africa. We raids their supplies from acrost the border an' we pectecks the Bulus from them Yaundes. Keeps their clo'es an' guns ter arm ourselves."

"You mean you've got an army?"

"In a manner o' speakin', yus," Leeds replied. "An' we needs a chaplain ter double as doctor. But no psalm singin', mind. Wot d'yer s'y?"

"I can't," Hope protested. "I'm neutral."

"Yer won't be fightin'," the little man reminded him. "I thought you mish'naries 'elped anyone as needs it."

"Well, now—"

"Red Cross is nootral. But they 'elps." Hope scratched his beard.

"Yer can do a power o' good—"

"I'll stay," Hope said. "But I'm not going to help you. I'll look after wounded or sick people and those driven out of their towns."

"Put it there."

They shook hands.

"Nah, 'ow abaht some tommy?"

Leeds up ended the gin bottle and grinned at Hope.

"Good afore breakfast. Try it."

"No, thanks."

"Blime!" Leeds drove a knobby fist into his other hand. "I clean fergot, wot with one thing an' another. 'Ope, 'ows Missus 'Ope? Gone 'ome on leaf? You ain't—she—"

"She's evacuated with the rest of the mission."

"An' you stayed be'ind."

Hope blushed and reached for a roast chicken.

"I mighta knoo it," Leeds said quietly. "Yore a good bloke even if yer are a mish'nary."

"Thanks." Hope grinned.

"How are they operating?" he asked.

"They got small parties all over the bush. Their lines o' communication goes from Ebolowa, dahn through Ambam—that's on'y fifteen mile north o' here. Then they veers west an' there's a crossin' below Banyassa, thirty mile to the west, dahn river. They got outposts near the river mouth, too. But on the south side there's only my boys."

A native stood outside the tent, scratching the fabric.

"People from Spanish side move to the river," he reported.



A long dugout glided toward them, propelled by a husky Bulu in the stern.



THE meal passed quickly, Leeds listening to Hope's news.

"I'd like ter get a look at that 'Un copper ag'in," Leeds chuckled. "Wonder where 'e got to?"

"He's about somewhere, up near Ebolowa, I think," Hope told him. "He's not forgotten you, either."

"Ebolowa, eh? We druv 'em outa Edea and most of the main 'Un army is rahnd Ebolowa. Nah the Frenchies is comin' up from the south, they might try ter retreat dahn this way."

"Nah we're goin' ter get a bit o' action," Leeds said, gulping a cup of tea. "Come an' see the fun."

Hope felt a bit funny as he followed Leeds out of the tent. The little man called softly to thirty Bulus who lined up opposite him. They were dressed in green German tunics and carried bayoneted rifles and cutlasses. They grinned, showing filed teeth as he talked.

They followed the messenger out of the clearing, stopping only to replace the screen of bush over the entrance.



"They won't disturb this place," Leeds explained. "This is a ole Ju-ju clearin' where they useter mike sacrifices." He winked at Hope. "I stopped that. The pawths is secret and they're 'ung with witch signs, savvy? Even the Yaundes is scared o' them. An' 'cos they're scared they don't report 'em to the 'Uns. So we're safe, see? Got half a dozen of 'em this side the river an' plenty on the north too. But we gotta stop in dif'rent ones every night or they might cop us leavin'."

Hope scarcely listened. He was marching doggedly in worn boots over slimy paths and wondering what was before. Great clumps of bush dripped on them and every now and then Hope ducked low under some grisly witch sign hanging from thorns.

At a sign the column halted and the messenger trotted ahead. Hope watched Leeds examine a Luger pistol.

"Expect trouble?" he couldn't help asking.

"Yer never knows," Leeds whispered.

The Bulus were crouching on their hams grinning at each other and caressing the long-bladed bayonets.

The man returned, beckoning.

"Fifty carriers with loads, ten soldiers."

was calm as a lake, the surface like a mirror. Leeds pursed his lips, emitting a peculiar lilting whistle. Almost immediately the prow of a canoe thrust through the greenery upstream and a long dugout glided toward them, propelled by a husky Bulu in the stern.

Two trips carried the men across and Leeds led them downstream. A couple of miles west they stopped and scouts went forward. Hope was dry-mouthed yet eager. He was not afraid, he told himself, although he knew that if they were surprised, all would die. It was all so unreal. They were all headed for battle, maybe death, yet they smiled and whispered, giggling as though they were on a picnic.

"Come on, 'Ope," whispered Leeds.

Hope followed the little man across a sun-speckled clearing, then down the gurgling bed of a rock-filled stream. Near where it entered the river they climbed the bank and peered under the branches of a mahogany. A raft piled with cases and bundles started across, paddled by half a dozen natives. They could see more goods on the south bank and a large group of people squatting beside them. There were men in an unfamiliar khaki uniform.

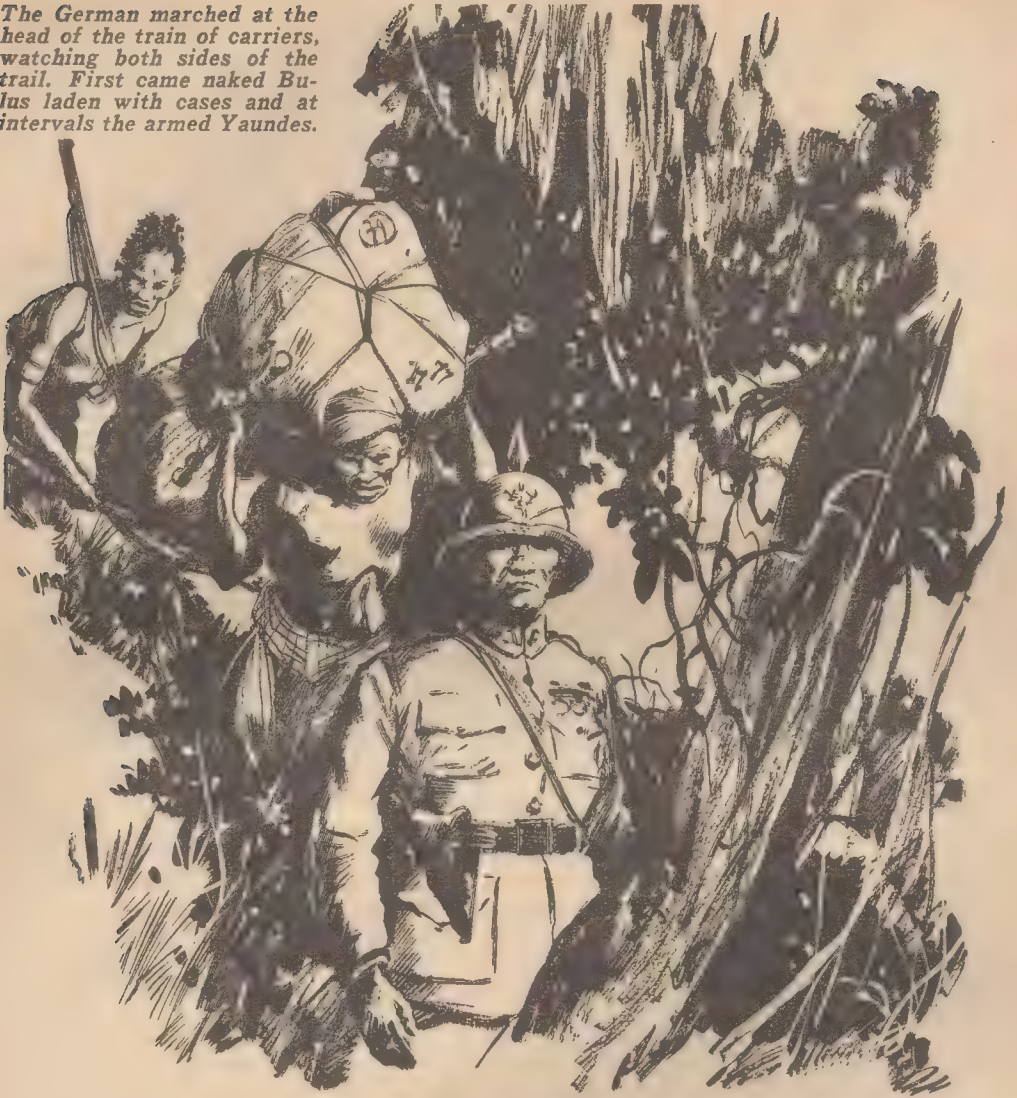
"Muni troops." Leeds whispered. "Let's see 'ow many we got this side."

Retreating stealthily from the bank, they pushed across a mangrove swamp until they could hear voices. Leeds led Hope on a wide detour to a trail.



LEEDS turned north for a mile and halted at the river bank. It was about two hundred yards wide at this point, the banks hidden under overhanging trees. It

The German marched at the head of the train of carriers, watching both sides of the trail. First came naked Bulus laden with cases and at intervals the armed Yaundes.



"They're dahn there," he whispered, and again whistled that peculiar, lilting call.

The guide appeared.

"Go back and bring the men here," Leeds said.

"Aye, n'tangan."

The man seemed to dissolve into the shadows of the great trees and Leeds led the way down the trail.

Hope nearly fell over him when he halted suddenly and stepped into the bush.

There were several natives squatting on the river bank. About sixteen Yaunde soldiers stood guard over them and a

jumpy-looking German under-officer crouched under a tree, a revolver in hand.

"See them carriers?" Leeds asked. "They're Bulus. Wot luck!"

"What d'you mean?" Hope demanded. "Look here, are you going to fire into them?"

"You'll see. Come on, let's git back."

Swiftly they retraced their steps until they were a couple of hundred yards back from the river. Then Leeds went into the bush to wait. In half an hour Hope made out the thirty armed natives. He saw Leeds post them, one by one, on each side of the trail with about ten yards between each man. Then the little man

sat down comfortably in the undergrowth.

"All we gotta do is wait," he said.

But they had not long to wait. Hope heard a mutter of orders, the crack of a rawhide and the accompanying yell. Leeds stood up.

"Get back there, 'Ope, outta the w'y. Lie dahn."

CHAPTER V

BEWARE THE SILENT WALKER



HOPE stepped back behind a tree where he could see.

Soon he made out the German at the head of the train of carriers. He marched, eyes watching the sides of the trail, closely followed by two Yaundes. Then there were naked Bulus laden with cases and at intervals down the line marched the Yaundes.

Hope scarcely dared breath. He saw the file pass the first hidden men. Why didn't Leeds do something? They came on, the Bulus marching heads down, bent under heavy loads. On they came until a movement turned Hope's eyes to Leeds. The little man was standing up now, pistol in hand while the German was nearly opposite him.

Then it happened!

As the German drew abreast Leeds whistled shrilly and stepped out into the trail, his pistol in the German's face before he could grab his own. At the same time the armed Bulus stepped from cover and every bayonet touched the chests of the Yaundes.

"Eke! Wah!" The carriers dropped their loads, exclaiming in terror.

"Peace," Leeds called to them. "We are your brothers. Pick up your loads."

Hope, stumbling from cover, saw them obey, while their guards stood like statues, their stupid faces blank with wonder. The under-officer was yellow with terror as he eyed the pistol Leeds kept on him.

"Drop guns," Leeds snapped. "One-time!"

The Yaundes let their rifles clatter to the path. Then, nudged by Bulu bayonets, they shuffled to the head of the column where they stood in a row. Leeds removed a revolver from the German's belt.

"Keep quiet, Fritzie," he told him, "an' yer'll be O.K."

"Kamerad," muttered the other.

Hope saw the Bulus gather the Yaunde rifles and search the men for ammunition. Each man had but two cartridges.

"Take their tunics and hats."

The men stood stripped.

"Tie them."

One of the Bulus produced a clattering bunch of manacles.

"They bin usin' these h'ornaments to 'old our boys," Leeds said quietly. "Lock them."

The sixteen men and their officer stood handcuffed.

The carriers were laughing now until Leeds motioned them to silence.

"Take them to the place we know," he ordered one of his men, and watched the grinning file trudge off into the bush under ten of his riflemen.

"More stores fer the Bulus." He grinned to Hope. "Did yer see they ain't got much ammunition? There's thirty cases of it we've took. I did spot a couple cases o' brandy too." He winked.

Under quiet orders the captured Yaundes were marched to the river bank. The canoe by which Leeds men had crossed slid down to them. The prisoners were swiftly ferried to the south bank. Leeds tossed the handcuff keys into the river.

"Take them to the west," Leeds ordered, "until you reach the Pangwe country. Then you will tell them to take these men, keeping on the south side of the river until they reach Campo."

"Aye, n'tangan."

The armed men threw off their German tunics and carrying only the cutlasses herded their dismayed captives into the bush.

"Suppose they run into an enemy patrol?" Hope asked.

"They won't. They're in their own bush, chum. They knows ev'ry pawth there is. 'Sides they'll get drum noos if there's any 'Uns abaht, like we did. No, them pris'ners'll be pawssed on 'til they reaches our blokes. Blime! they'll wonder 'ow the 'ell they got there."

"I noticed a few nasty looks about the Bulus," Hope muttered. "Won't they—"

"Kill 'em—? Nah. That was the 'ardest thing I 'ad ter teach 'em, though. Prisoners ain't ter be 'urt, I sez. They kin

only kill in battle, I sez." The thin brown face grew bitter. "I wouldn't blame 'em, though. Arter wot them Yaundes done ter my Bulus."

He led the way upstream until they sighted the canoe ferrying the Bulu carriers and their loads to the south bank. Then he marched them triumphantly to camp.

There were cases of rifle ammunition, bombs and hard tack, as well as a few cases of spirits. Hope accepted a pair of marching boots from a bundle and Leeds buried the rest, placing a witch sign over the place.

"No one'll touch that." He turned, smiling to the tired missionary. "Not a bad d'ys work, eh, 'Ope? How d'yer like war?"



DURING the weeks that followed, Hope was astounded by the organization Leeds had perfected. He had spies everywhere.

Every dusk and dawn the signal drums bumbled through the forest and Leeds sent messengers south to the advancing French, west to the British off Campo and often to Allied detachments clearing the enemy from the Lolodorf country far to the north. And outside most Bulu villages were hidden stores taken from enemy carriers.

When German patrols were on the march villages were deserted and the inmates hid in the bush until danger was past. Sometimes Bulu carriers under German guard would quietly slip into hiding beside the trail taking their loads with them.

Sometimes the Bulus would have to fight the Yaundes and Hope was kept busy tending bayonet and spear wounds. There were few bullet wounds, he was glad to note.

"They're short of ammo," Leeds told him. "An' as long as we stops it comin' acrost the river, they'll stay short."

The two white men traveled up and down river visiting various hideaways in the bush south of the Campo, collecting refugee natives from gutted towns farther north. Some few Bulus were pressed into German service but they were armed only with spears, and many were persuaded to desert as soon as they realized they would be protected from their masters.

So they went through wet season and dry season. Hope went down with fever once or twice and Leeds nursed him like a baby. But the little cockney seemed to be indestructible. Day after day he marched fifteen to twenty miles, eating where he could and stopping where the night caught him.

The Bulus constructed booby traps for the marching Yaundes. Elephant pits were dug, into which tumbled the marching levies. Trails were screened off by greenery and fresh trails cut and trodden, trails that led the Germans to bottomless swamps.

Then came news that the French from Oyem had crossed the river. There was a prolonged rattle of gunfire and Leeds' scouts reported that the German forces had retreated to Ambam.

"Fine," Leeds said that morning. "They've got 'em squeezed. The French an' British is comin' south from Ebolowa and they're cut orf from the north. That means the 'Uns ain't got nowhere's ter go but Muni. They'll try ter get acrost arahnd 'ere somewheres."

He was right too, for long columns of prisoners and supplies began marching from Ambam in a southwesterly direction to cross the river and frontier below Banyassa.

There was heavy fighting, though. Every day the rattle of rifles and machine guns was punctuated by the heavier bark of field guns and the ripping crash of giant trees shattered by explosions.

"Von Hagen is retreatin' with 'em," Leeds said one evening. "They got civilians ter evacuate; even the governor is among 'em. I gotta good mind ter 'ave a shot at capturin' 'im."

"Better not," Hope counseled. "They'll fight like cats to protect him. You'll lose a lot of Bulus for nothing. If they are retreating, the capture of the governor won't mean much."

Hope noticed that many of the Bulus were anxious to fight. They had lost wives, children, fathers and brothers, and they were eager for revenge. But Leeds had forbade them.

"But we are not women," Hope heard one chief protest. "In the old time when Yaundes burned our towns we fought them and enslaved them. Why must we hide like piccins?"

"This is a new fashion," Leeds insisted. "This is a white man's war. You will wait, only a little time, and then you can go back to your towns and live in peace. For the Germani and the Yaunde will be driven back to their own lands."

"We believe, for you are our father and our mother," declared the chief, completely satisfied.

"I couldn't get their confidence like that in a hundred years," Hope said fervently.

"Tell yer wot," Leeds smiled. "I'm a bit of a pagan meself, I guess, an' they understands me. I'd like ter attack 'em, meself. But I ain't goin' ter do it. We'll jes' watch their trail and if they tries ter make a stand once they're drove outta Ambam, we'll get the Frenchies dahn 'ere ter cut 'em off."

The drums that night reported the Germans entrenching on the south side of the river below Owila.

"That means they're gonna make a stand," Leeds muttered. "They'll ambush the Frenchies ter 'ell as they crosses the river." He called softly and the old drummer stood before him.

"Make drum talk to the men of Mesele," Leeds ordered. "Tell them to carry word to the Franchi that the enemy will fight at the river."

"Aye, n'tangan."

The drums thudded and bonged in complicated rhythm, for minutes. Then silence filled the night, broken only by the spasmodic firing of panicky sentries to the northwest.

It was nearly an hour before Leeds cocked his head at the sound of a faint drumming.

"They hear," he told Hope. "The Frenchies'll know about them trenches afore mornin'."

"Well, Charlie," Hope told him, "you've done a wonderful job. You can start getting your Bulus back to their towns now."

"Not so fast," the little man grinned. "We ain't finished yet. They're takin' hundreds o' Bulus as carriers inter Muni. Know wot that means? They'll get scuppered soon's they tries ter get back through all them strange tribes; Fang an' sich. We gotta get close an' try ter get 'em away afore they crosses the border."



NEXT MORNING Leeds, with squads of armed Bulus, crouched beside the trail from Owila to Banyassa. Gangs of Bulus laden with supplies hurried under the rawhides of brawny Yaunde soldiers.

"Stampede 'em," Leeds whispered to Hope. "Watch."

As the guards passed, them Leeds would whistle. The armed Bulus would fire into the air, screaming wildly. The Yaundes stood for moments firing their few shots then broke and fled into the bush.

"Come, Bulus," Leeds called to the panic-stricken carriers. "Drop those loads. Follow me. It is the Silent Walker."

The carriers ran like hares into the bush yelling with relief and followed Leeds' guides into safety.

"See?" Leeds chuckled, wiping his sweating neck. "I got men at every cross-roads on this trail doin' the sime thing. They'll 'ave their work cut aht ter git many more o' my Bulus away."

Firing still persisted beyond Owila where the Germans were fighting stubbornly to protect their line of retreat.

"They must 'ave some stren'th dahn river a bit," Leeds decided. "Er else they wouldn't need ter fight so 'ard up there. Le's tike a look-see dahn stream."

They flitted across the trail and entered the dense forest again.

"There's another trail arahnd 'ere somewheres."

In an hour they found it, running almost parallel to the river.

"I got some Pangwes on the south bank," Leeds said. "They're scrappers if yer like. I don't want ter use 'em if I don't 'ave ter. They tikes a bit o' stoppin' once they're started."

They pressed on, Hope making heavy weather of it through dense thorn thickets and over slimy lianas. But Leeds, a comic figure in his green tunic and shorts, kept those knobby knees pumping like cranks, tirelessly and silently. Hope wondered crossly how on earth those big feet could move so quietly.

At dusk they halted and Leeds sat in the shelter of a cottonwood root. One of the men crept forward, whispering.

"Banyassa's ter the left," Leeds muttered. "I got some Bulus there 'elpin'

the carriers ter desert. We better go softly—softly fer a bit.”

After a rest they moved on in pitch darkness. Hope was dog-tired. He could see nothing but the swinging green sparks of fireflies and the occasional phosphorescent glow of a fungus. Sounds came from the bush and once or twice small animals, startled by their passing, crashed off through the forest.

Around midnight there was a sudden flurry of gunfire dead ahead. Monkeys, disturbed by the racket, screeched dismally and fled through the treetops.

But Leeds pressed on.

“Bastids ‘as caught some pore Bulus,” he growled. “We’re abaht two mile from the river an’ the trail’s half a mile ter yer right. Le’s get on it.”

Hope was grateful for the smother going. He could hear the faint breathing of the five Bulus following and the rare squelch as Leeds’ boot came out of mud. Suddenly he stumbled into the little man.

“Old ‘ard. We’re gettin’ close.”

A Bulu came up.

“Go forward, and if there are enemies return and tell their number.”

The man flitted off like a ghost.

Hope felt himself nodding. He forced himself with enormous effort to stay awake.

“What’s ahead?”

“Wait.”

Hope dozed. Then awoke with a terrific jerk as something gripped his arm.

“They’re comin’,” Leeds whispered. “Sojers ahead an’ German noncombatants. Behind is the carriers with a small guard.”

“What’re you going to do? We haven’t got enough—”

“We’ll jump ‘em when the main body’s gone through,” Leeds said. “There must be a British column arter ‘em. They’ll leave the carriers in the rear to cop wot’s meant for them, the dirty ‘ounds.”

“It’s getting light.”

“Yus. Git orf the trail.”

They moved into the overhanging bush while slowly the trunks became visible in the lightening gray.

Confused sounds came to them. There was the crash of an animal retreating through the undergrowth.

“Ere they come.”



A GROUP of natives in green tunics advanced along the trail, their eyes rolling, searching the shadowy forest. Behind them

marched a scarfaced sergeant.

“Fifteen,” whispered Leeds as they passed. “Let ‘em go.”

Then came a whispering group of whites huddled together like sheep with a few white soldiers marching beside them. A double file of native troops passed with white officers in the rear.

Suddenly firing broke out to the north.

“Damn,” hissed Leeds, flattening himself.

The troops halted, mumbling, while their German officers ran back over the trail. From where they lay Hope could see the glint of a bayonet not three yards from him. It shook a little and he could hear the heavy breathing of the Yaunde holding it.

Something dropped on his head and started crawling. He sweated at every pore. What if it was a scorpion? He was afraid to move. The bayonet lowered. Had the man seen him?

The firing stopped and the officers returned. Hope permitted himself a gusty breath as the Yaundes moved on.

“Blime! That was a close one,” Leeds chuckled.

“Nothing to laugh at,” Hope snapped, brushing a twig from his hair.

There came the sound of carriers, the creak of baskets and the slap of rawhides. Someone called urgent orders as they appeared. Leeds let several pass with their guards. Then he jumped to his feet whistling.

The Bulus yelled like fiends, firing their rifles.

“Come, Bulus,” yelled Leeds, dancing like a dervish behind a tree. “It is the Silent Walker. Run, drop your loads. Run.”

The Yaundes were shouting and firing blindly. But they seemed to have plenty of ammunition. The forest was crowded with shouting carriers bewildered by the sudden pandemonium and milling like frightened animals.

“Follow! Follow!” one of Leeds’ men was yelling, and they raced into the thickest of the jungle.

“This way, ‘Ope,” Leeds panted and led the way westward beside the trail.

The soldiers were firing in all directions and Hope ran stumbling, breathless, panicky as bullets flicked through the leaves about him. Leeds was like a monkey in the half light ahead, chuckling as he ran. He motioned Hope to follow, ducked behind a tree and dropped to the ground.

"Blime! That was a good 'un," he gasped. "They're scared ter git orf the trail. They thinks we're 'undreds. Wot a mess."

Hope could hear men running up and down the trail, yelling and cursing. Somewhere behind them firing still went on. Then they both flattened as a machine gun sprayed bullets in a murderous stream through the undergrowth.

"'Opes they don't 'it none o' them Bulus," Leeds muttered.

"They didn't all get away," Hope said. "Listen."

The slash of rawhides and the yells of carriers tore through the forest. Someone cursed, then came the regular crack-crack of a rawhide.

Leeds stood up, his face pinched, his eyes cold and small as a snake's.

"Come on," he muttered.

With no attempt at concealment he shoved through the tangle towards the trail, dragging his pistol from its holster. Someone was screaming ahead, short, breathless screams that followed the steady crack of a rawhide. And above the screams were the heavy, grunted curses of a German.

They stopped at the edge of the trail. There was a small clearing cluttered with dropped loads. A gang of natives stood shivering and a group of Yaundes lounged grinning at a white man who stood above a small naked figure; a Bulu, who writhed, bleeding and crying out under the lash of a viciously twisted strip of elephant hide.

"Bacher!" Hope whispered.

"*Schwein! Schwein!*" he punctuated the brutal slashes. "Bulu *schwein!* You try to run, eh? You drop load, eh? *Verdamnte hund!* I cut you to pieces. Look, you other *schweinen!* You look, I kill this beast. You too will die if you try to run! Look! Watch!"

Hope grabbed for Leeds, but he was too late. The little man stepped into the open. For a moment the Yaundes did not notice him in his German tunic, so

engrossed they were in the Bulu's torture. Leeds had time to reach the slaverling Bacher and he slammed him across the head with his pistol barrel.

"You bastid!" he breathed. "I've a good mind ter blow yer bleddy 'ead orf." He kicked the stunned man.

The Bulu writhed out of the way like a broken thing.

"Keep yer dirty mouth shut!" Leeds spat at the dazed Bacher.

His pistol pointed steady as a rock at the stupefied German's bruised and muddy face.

Then one of the Yaundes moved a little.

"Back, bushman!" Leeds said quietly.

"Back, or I kill."



THEY stood motionless, overawed, and Leeds knew it.

"Bulus," he said in their tongue. "Take your brother and go to your people. It is the Silent Walker."

"*Eké!*" they stuttered, and sneaking past the Yaundes picked up the still figure and carried him into the bush.

Hope heard Leeds' men talking to them and they disappeared.

"*Kamerad,*" Bacher was whining.

"Yer don't remember me, do yer, Mister Bleedin' Bacher?" Leeds sneered. "I'm the bloke wot give yer that fat eye dahn at Kribi. Remember, fatty?"

Bacher stared blankly.

"*Kamerad.*" He looked at Hope. "*Kamerad.* I am prisoner. You—cannot hurt prisoner." He managed to sit up, hands twitching between his knees, helmet dropped from his cropped, bullet head.

His eyes grew slippery as they watched Leeds' pistol. Then he glanced at Hope.

"*Herr Hope.* You are American. You will not let him—kill me?" The guttural voice rose a little.

"I'm jes' goin' ter give yer the 'idin' of yer life," Leeds stated.

"No. You joke make." The thick mouth writhed in an attempt at a smile. "Once you hurt me. But that iss long time. It was joke. See? I laugh. See?"

"Shaddap!"

"*Herr Hope,*" the voice went on, always rising, until it reached a panicky whine. "You are neutral. If this man touches me you and all your mission-

aries will be shot. They will shoot you—"

"Get ter yer feet!" Leeds barked. "Order them Yaundes ter march on to the river. Go on, afore I soils me foot on yer."

Bacher scrambled to his feet, straightened his torn tunic, fumbling the buttons at his fat, sweating neck. His men stared at him and Hope saw scorn in their eyes.

"March," Bacher ordered. "Makee go river-side, one-time."

They shuffled off, looking backward.

"Nah, you come erlong with me."

"Aber—"

"Git!" Leeds shoved his pistol into the German's back and hustled him off the trail. "'Ere, wait." He jerked the revolver from Bacher's holster and slipped the sword from its scabbard. "Get on, fatty, you an' me's goin' ter 'ave a reck-onin'." He shoved him ahead until they were a quarter mile from the path.

"No danger of int'ruction 'ere. Hope, git on with the carriers an' see 'ow that pore kid is. I'll attend ter this mess an' catch up with yer."

"Don't leave! Don't go!" babbled Bacher. "He iss mad. He will kill me. Do not leave!"

Hope ran off through the trees to where he heard the men moving. The Bulu boy was badly cut up but with the stoic indifference to pain that the bush people possess, he was trying to walk.

"Can you go well?" Hope asked him.

"Aye, *n'tangan*, but I will go back to the Silent Walker."

"Nay, you must go with these men."

"I am no small boy," the youth said. "I am Sala of Mesele. I am a man now that my father is killed. I will go to the Silent Walker, for I am his man."

"Wait, first. Hasten now with these, your brothers. Take care, for there are enemies on the way. I will go to the Silent Walker."

"Aye, *n'tangan*."

Hope watched the lad limp off with the others. Then he turned to hurry back to Leeds. For several minutes he dodged lianas, clambered over dead trunks until at last he heard voices.

In a small clearing between great trees Leeds confronted the German.

"So yer won't fight," the cockney was saying. "Me brave p'liceman, who flogs little kids when they're scared to 'it back. Go on, tike orf yer bleedin' toonic. I'm

goin' rahnd yer like a cooper rahnd a bleedin' cawsk. Come on, put up yer dooks!"

The German breathed heavily, mouth working.

"Come on, yer cowardly bastid!" Leeds threw his gun on the ground and moved toward the German.

Bacher screamed like a cat and charged, head down. But Leeds slipped to one side and slammed a bony fist into the German's neck. Bacher yelped and dived for the pistol.

"Come orf it!" Leeds grabbed him by the scruff of the neck and dragged him clear. But Bacher groveled, kicking and clawing like a monkey, babbling, panting as he fought to get at the weapon. Then he wrapped his arms about Leeds' legs and tried to bite him.

"Hup, there!" Leeds' bony knee shoved into his face and he rolled on his back, slavering and gasping for breath.

Suddenly there was a crashing about them.

"Look out!" Hope yelled and jumped for the pistol.

But he was too late. The clearing was filled with Yaunde soldiers. A rifle barked and a wild bullet pinged past Leeds' head.

CHAPTER VI

PRISONERS



"ACH, so!" Bacher scrambled to his feet, eyes wild with relief. "Now!" He kicked fiercely at Leeds and scooped up the pistol. "Ha!" He glared triumphantly at the Yaundes, who had followed them. "So you think my men will run away, eh? *Schwein!* You would fight me? Me!" He swaggered, feet apart, drooling with passion. "I shoot you in the belly. I load you with bullets. You dog, who dare to put hands on me!"

The pistol lifted and Leeds straightened up, rigid as steel, waiting for it.

"*Was machen-Sie da?*"

The pistol wavered, then jerked to a level again.

"*Achtung!*"

"Was?" Bacher said faintly, eyes rolling over his shoulder. Then the pistol was lowered and he stood stiffly at the salute.

At the edge of the clearing stood a tall, spare man in scrubbed khaki, a broad helmet on his head, a pistol in his fist. His face was burned almost black and a small, gray mustache contrasted strangely with it.

"Also?" came the soft, cold voice.

"Prisoners, *Herr Major* Von Hagen," he gulped. "I captured them. This one is Englisher guerrilla. The other, an American, I know him well; he iss a spy. I took them, risking—"

"And you were about to shoot them."

"*Nein, Herr Major*," babbled Bacher. "They threatened me, but—"

"What iss your name?" snapped Von Hagen.

Leeds eyed him calmly. The soldiers were standing like statues, well back from this almost legendary figure, their eyes following every move.

"Name o' Charles Leeds," said the little man cockily.

"What are you doing in Cherman uniform?"

"Fightin' a bit of a war."

"You?" Cold eyes bored into Hope's.

"My name is Hope. I'm a missionary. I'm here to help the Bulus you've—"

"So. Guerrillas." Von Hagen looked them over thoughtfully, then turned to Bacher who stood cowering.

"March them to the river and hold them there," he ordered. "Remember, we do not shoot captives without trial, we Chermans."

"Nah, yer jest flog 'em ter death," sneered Leeds.

"Take them away."

"*Zu befehl, Herr Major*," barked Bacher, saluting.

Von Hagen went back to the trail, followed by his escort.

"Now, *schweinen*," Bacher growled. "You think you are safe now, eh?"

"Lissen, fatty," Leeds grinned at him. "Yer scared spitless o' that orficer, an' you knows it. You daren't do a thing ter us."

"That you think."

Bacher ordered his men to fall in about the two whites and headed them back to the trail. Reaching it he turned them south.

"Now I got you," he jeered. "Von Hagen iss gone north. We will see now who iss master."

"Ain't 'e got a nawsty temper, now!"

"*Halt Maul!*" Bacher slapped him across the mouth. "I shoot you now."

"You'll pay fer that, fatty," said Leeds quietly.

"Keep quiet." Hope felt his nerves twanging like banjo strings. "We're in enough trouble now."

The trail was narrow but Bacher cursed as he saw deserted head loads beside the path. There was still scattered firing some distance to the rear and the Yaundes hurried forward nervously.

"We should have men near here," Leeds said quietly in Bulu. "Be ready to run when I make the call of the brain-fever bird."

"What do you mumble in your pig talk?" yelled Bacher.

"Wouldn't you like ter know, ducky?"

"Silence."

The Yaundes watched them closely and Bacher, stepping close, drove his pistol into Leeds' back.

"For a year I haff waited for this," he panted. "You dog who struck me! *Verdammte schwein!* You, too, mission man. You think you're too holy to die, yess?"

Suddenly he halted the column.

"Look out for this scum," he told the Yaundes. "If they try run go makee shoot them one-time. I come back small time."

He crept forward and returned in a few minutes grinning nervously.

"Watch him. He's got a nasty look," Hope whispered.



"NOW." Bacher slid his eyes over them. "I am not going to be bothered with you all day. You can go. Go, now. I let you free. You see, we Germans are not like you Englishers. We are merciful. You can go."

"Lookit that pistol shakin' in 'is fist," Leeds remarked. "Oh, no, fatty. We ain't giving you a chawnst ter put bullets in our backs. Not bleddy likely."

"*Schweinen!*" yelled the German. He broke into a peculiar stamping shuffle, his face mottled with rage.

"'E looks like a pawin' bull tryin' ter git 'is courage up," Leeds said coolly. "Go on, fatty, shoot, I dare yer. Yer ain't got the nerve!"

"Watch him," he went on in swift Bulu. "If he moves dive fer his feet. I'll get the gun."

There were shouts ahead and a few shots. The Yaundes faced that way, fidgeting their rifles. Bacher's face turned a second.

Suddenly the whistle shrilled.

"At 'im!" Leeds yelled and jumped to one side.

Hope dived in a splendid tackle and with a yell Bacher crashed on his face. Leeds stamped on the gun hand and jerked it away. The trail was filled with yelling, firing savages. The Yaundes screamed, firing at random, then raced crashing through the forest.

"After them!" shouted Leeds, slapping the roaring Bacher into the ground. "Chase them."

"Come on, get him up," he panted. Hope rose to his feet, jerking the German with him.

"I'm a man of peace," he puffed. "But I suppose this was necessary."

"Betcher life. Nah, Mister Bleddy Bacher, 'oo's goin' ter shoot 'oo? Come on!"

Hope dragged the German into the undergrowth. There were dozens of dark shapes ducking this way and that amid the trees.

"It is the Silent Walker," someone called.

"Aye," Leeds replied. "Drive the Yaundes. Drive them."

Whooping, several armed Bulus dashed across the trail after the fleeing enemy.

Hope was walking strongly, dragging the resistless Bacher after him. They stopped at the river bank.

"You would not kill me?"

"My, 'ow you chinge!" Leeds marveled. "Fust yore goin' ter shoot our bellies aht, then yore scared we'll 'urt yer. Is this the brive 'Uns we've 'eard abaht? Come on, yer fat slob!"

The racket of firing came but faintly now, but down river they could hear the sound of people crossing.

"Yer through, Bacher," Leeds said. "Nah put yer dooks up. You kin 'old the pistol this time. 'Ope. Then fatty 'ere won't 'ave no bad ideas."

Bacher stood like a stone, head down, jowls drooping.

"Shoot me," he repeated dully. "Kill me, brute, *schwein*. I shall not fight."

There was a sharp crack as Leeds, face deadly, slapped the German. But he did not move. A red welt on his face, he slumped, tears rolling down his nose, blubbering, without attempting to protect himself.

"Well, I'll be go ter 'ell!" Leeds spat disgustedly. "Wot a bleddy worm! Won't fight, eh? Well, mebbe yer right. 'Ere, I gotta idea. Tike 'is pants orf, 'Ope."

"You crazy?" demanded the astounded missionary.

"One thing these 'Uns don't like," said Leeds, "is ter be lawfed at. Let them Yaundes see 'im the way I'm gonna fix 'im an' 'is kind won't be much good arahnd 'ere. Go on, get them pants orf!"

Bacher winked through his tears.

"You will not 'urt me?"

"Nah, won't 'arm an' 'air of yer bleedin' square 'ead."

Swiftly the German stripped leggings and trousers. Thin legs jutted like white wands from his round body.

"Pretty, ain't 'e? Nah yer toonic."

He stripped the tunic and dragged it on backward. Then tied the man's arms behind his back and stuck his helmet on back to front.

"Allus somethin' funny abaht a bloke with no pants on," he observed to Hope.

"You can't leave him here," stammered the shocked missionary. "He'll be bitten to death."

"Cawn't I?" Leeds looked poisonous for a moment. "I'll shoot 'im if yer like. 'E's damned lucky I don't peg 'im out on a ant hill. I seen some o' the Bulus fixed that way."

Hope looked away from the rage in Leeds' eyes.



THE little man grabbed Bacher by the shoulders, spun him around to face the back trail.

"Nah, retreat ter Muni, me conquerin' bleddy 'ero!" He helped him on the way with a healthy boot in the rear.

Bacher yelped and stumbled off through the undergrowth.

The two men—Hope, big, burly, sweating; Leeds, small, bony, alert as a terrier—stood watching until the awkward,

blubbling, stumbling figure disappeared.

"Let's tike a rest," Leeds said. "They'll never cop us in this tangle."

After a while they heard faint shouts.

"Bacher yellin' fer 'elp."

Then, through the echoing aisles of trees, came the faint sound of prolonged laughter.

"That's got 'em," Leeds said. "Fust time laughin's bin 'eard in this bush fer a long time. Come on, le's go back an' see wot's wot."

They followed the river until Leeds found a hidden canoe. They crossed and struck south-east over a trail that was invisible to Hope but one which seemed familiar to the little cockney.

It was late afternoon when, after following a trail of witch signs, Leeds whistled and they entered one of his secret camps. It was crowded with refugee Bulus; they squatted under trees, some with women and children, waiting with that dumb patience of persecuted people. Some came forward eagerly.

"The Germani go from us," Leeds told them. "Soon you shall go back to your towns."

They reached a shelter and Hope stumbled onto a camp cot and slept.

It was night when he awakened. A few fires lit up the surrounding trees. Leeds sat beside one, his face like a carved mask as he puffed quietly on his pipe.

"Notice ennythin?" he asked quietly.

"What?" mumbled the sleepy missionary.

"No shootin'."

"Uh-huh." Hope crawled back to his cot.

In the morning he felt better. Leeds offered him tea, which he swallowed gratefully then went outside to wash his bearded face. As he finished he heard the not too distant thump of a drum.

"The Germani have gone from this place," it said. "They have gone into Muni. The Franchi rest at Ambam and along the river towns. The Inglesi are at Campo and some come up river."

"'Ear that?" Leeds shouted. "The war's over."

"All that day scouts came in to report the last of the enemy crossing the frontier. Hundreds of Bulus walked aimlessly over their trails searching for relatives

and collecting their town brothers.

"We're goin' ter Ekin," Leeds announced. "You an' me. O Bulus"—he turned to the crouching natives—"there is food. There is white man's cabin bread. Give to all who are hungered." He called the old drummer. "Make drum talk to all Bulus to take off their Germani clothes lest they be shot by the Franchi. Bring all guns to this place."

"Aye, n'tangan."

They started toward the river. Then a stocky figure stepped in the path, crouched and patted the ground before Leeds's large feet.

"We smooth the path before a king," Hope translated the gesture.

"Git up, son," Leeds looked embarrassed.



THE young man stood, eyes staring worshipfully at Leeds, the broken mouth sketching a smile.

"I have talked with you," said the little man. "What is your name?"

"I am Sala of Mesele," said the Bulu. "I am your man."

"Let's have a look at them stripes."

The marks were ugly but healing. The boy had daubed them with some herb poultice.

"Good," Leeds said. "You will heal. Now go to your town, find your brothers and work."

"Nay, n'tangan. I am the man of the Silent Walker."

"Well, I'll be blowed," Leeds mumbled. "'E wants ter come along o' me. Ain't that nice." He scratched in confusion. "Well, I'll need a boy, I guess. Sala, you are my man."

"N'tangan."

"'Ere, stop that crouchin' an' pattin'. Comerlong."

They went on, the Bulu stepping proudly behind.

At the river a canoe carried them swiftly to Ekin, where an old trade trail crossed into what is now Gaboon. There was a floating bridge across the stream consisting of cottonwood logs lashed together and tethered to trees on both banks.

A clearing filled with charred remnants of huts was all that remained of Ekin. A

few smashed canoes lay on the north bank.

They stepped ashore.

"Were many killed?" Hope asked.

"Most of 'em," Leeds said soberly. "But we'll build another town, farther back in the bush. An' I'll fix meself another fact'ry an' plantation."

"You going to stay here?"

"This is me 'ome," Leeds said simply.

"I've fought fer it. The Bulus is me pals. I gotta stop 'ere an' 'elp 'em get settled ag'in."

Picking their way past the blackened timbers they found a trail and followed it north. In two hours they were at Ambam, a fairly large village with the remains of a mud fort tucked away from the trail. There were soldiers in French uniforms and some white officers.

They shouted when the two appeared. Some leveled rifles.

"Put yer 'ands up," Leeds muttered. "They looks nervous."

They marched forward.

"Where's the orf'cer in charge?" Leeds shouted.

"*Qu'est-ce qu'il y a?*" A thin-faced, fork-bearded man stepped out of a mud hut.

"*Commandant Mathieu!*" Hope called.

"What?" The officer, thin as a sword, yellow with fever, turned burning eyes on him. "The missionary. *M'sieu 'Ope*. What do you here?"

"We been 'elpin' yer," Leeds answered for him. "An' nah that the 'Uns is gone, 'ow's abaht my Bulus gettin' back ter their towns?"

"Are you, by any chance, the man who is called the Silent Walker?" Mathieu regarded him closely.

"Wot of it?"

"You have organized guerrillas, I think." The officer's voice was cold.

"I bin 'elpin' me pals," Leeds said doggedly.

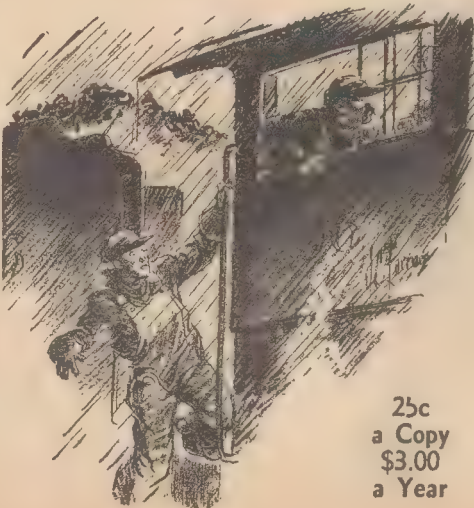
"You have captured arms, ammunition and stores from the enemy. Where are they?" Mathieu snapped suddenly.

"They're all right," said Leeds hardily. "What I wants ter know is, when do my Bulus get back ter their 'omes?"

"This place will be occupied until there is no further danger from the enemy," Mathieu told him. "Then we shall probably retire to Ebolowa. I may stay on as military *administrateur*. I suggest, *M'sieu* Silent Walker, that you bring in all firearms and ammunition that your . . . men . . . may have, and any stores that are of military importance. The rest I shall not demand."

"Nice of yer," Leeds blurted out. "An' wot do my Bulus get fer fightin' yer battles for yer?"

"You probably have enough stores to feed them," said Mathieu sweetly. "But we can do nothing to rebuild their vil-



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lages. Some compensation may be arranged later," he went on vaguely. "But if you can get them repatriated quietly, I shall ask no questions. But the arms and ammunition and military stores must be brought in, at once."



HOPE sat back in his chair, mopping his brow. He looked into the suddenly humbled eyes of Sir Hengist who fumbled a pencil on the polished table.

"Well," he finished. "That is how Charlie Leeds won the war."

"And what did you do, Mr. Hope?" asked Sir Hengist.

"I got my wife across to the States and by then we were in it. So I got in a few licks on my own account. I came back to Cameroons in 1919."

"Was Leeds still there?"

Hope smiled.

"Large as life and twice as noisy. He built a compound a quarter mile south of Ekin, which he had them rebuild a half mile back from the river. He kept that floating bridge in repair too. Now Ekin is on the main trade route between Gaboon and Ebolowa. He's got a magnificent bungalow, all native built, and a floor in his bedroom made out of gin cases. He's doing very well, or was. I asked him where he got all the goods to set himself up.

"'I give Mathieu the guns an' ammo,' he told me. 'But the Bulus got a bounty fer every one of 'em. There was fifteen 'undred not countin' a couple I kep' aht fer meself. I kep' a few cases o' supplies too. Most of 'em were fer trade any'ow, so I thought I'd use 'em meself.'"

Hope grinned a little.

"I visit him there every six months or so. And I can tell you that if war comes to Cameroons again he'll be running it. He's King of the Bulus and they won't do a thing without his advice. You take him away from them, there'll be no handling anyone south of Ebolowa. And, don't forget"—Hope stared into Sir Hengist's eyes—"Muni is still across Leeds' river."

"*M'sieu* Ope is quite right," said one of the French officials. "*M. l'Administrateur* Mathieu has retired and is now, I

believe, dead. But I have seen his reports while he was at Ebolowo. He never needed to send inspectors into the river country while Leeds was there."

"Well," puffed Sir Hengist, "all this puts a different complexion on the matter. Should have been told these things. Er—thanks—er Mr. Hope. Er—send for this—er—Charlie Leeds."

"I think I hear him coming," said Hope getting up swiftly and running out.

At the foot of the stairs a small, touselled figure was howling abuse at a native sentry.

"Lemme h'up there, yer cut-faced h'ape!" he was bawling. "I gotta tear a bit o' lard orf a certin person."

He squinted up at Hope.

"'Allo, 'Ope. 'Ere, tell this 'ere sojeter let me pawss. I'm goin' rahnd that there Sir 'Engist Bleddy Thomson like a cooper rahnd a cawsk."

"Why don't you tell him yourself, Charlie?" said Hope. "Look at him; he's a Bulu."

"Blime." Leeds stared at the sentry. "Cawn't let me pals see me like this."

Miraculously he straightened up.

"O Bulu," he said, "I will talk with the big *n'tangan*. Lead me to him."

"He is the Silent Walker," whispered Hope.

"*Ekel*" The sentry stared, then dropping his rifle with a clatter, sprawled on the floor and patted it frantically.

"Nah see wot yer done," Leeds said. "Get up, son, yer'll be in trouble."

The soldier leaped to his feet, eyes shining, face working.

"Follow, O Silent Walker." His voice was like a trumpet.

"What's this?" Sir Hengist's large face peered down. "Bringing your army to arrest me, Mr. Leeds?"

"Blime!" Leeds gasped, staring at Hope.

The missionary winked.

"Come up," Sir Hengist invited, "and tell me about the Bulus, if you have time before you return to them."

Hope stepped outside into the sunshine. He felt very thirsty after all that talking. He felt very happy too. In fact, he felt so lighthearted that if Charlie Leeds had asked him to have a wet at that moment, he would have accepted.

BABY FROM BASE POINT

By M. A. SHUMARD III

ILLUSTRATED
BY
FRANK KRAMER



Old Base Point's battery hit the stockade fence in a roar of speed and went plowing right through it like a mad bull

OLD BASE POINT was our battery commander. Ordinarily you call your C. O. "the Old Man," but we had a different nickname for ours. It wasn't until the Japs took us prisoner,

though, that anyone found out he knew what we called him. But then the Japs learned something that day, too, so I guess the score was even all around.

Old Base Point came by his name in our

battery. In artillery firing you use a base point as a sort of target anchor to shift your guns from. A base point is dependable and so was our battery commander. He wasn't the dashing hero type of officer. Old Base Point had been a farmer back in civilian life and he continued to look like one. He wore his uniform because of his rank and not because he thought he looked good in it. The insignia were always just a little off-center and even if he put his slacks on at the cleaners they were baggy at the knees right away. He was just a little on the heavy side, about forty, with red hair and a freckled face and easy-going ways that made you wonder how he found time for all the work he did.



THE Japs took one look at him and laughed. In separating the men from the boys they wrote Old Base Point off as a total loss. He never did look very enthusiastic about anything and the Japs took his manner for dejection over being defeated. Of course he was pretty unhappy about that. He had seen some of his boys go down and although we even used our field guns on the Japs, it was a losing fight. One battery can't beat off an infantry regiment for very long, anyway, no matter how good they are.

The Japs scrambled all over our guns and trucks, jabbering and shouting away excitedly at the fine equipment we had and it hurt Old Base Point more than anything else to think that his guns might be shooting back at our side before long. There was nothing we could do, though, but obey their orders and so, with their bayonets jabbing at our backs, we coupled the guns to the trucks and started off for the Jap camp. We ended up on top of a mountain. There was thick jungle all over it and the road up was a tough steep one that had our big trucks groaning.

On top of the mountain they herded us all into a sort of stockade with a heavy iron wire prison fence around it. They left the guns coupled and lined the trucks up all in a row while we sat in a group out in front of them. The guards eyed us meanly, hoping for a halfway excuse to run a bayonet through someone, while the Jap officers rushed off to their headquarters tent to report to one of the sons of heaven. Old

Base Point and his junior officers sat near us and we all sweated and cursed the heat while we wondered if we would be used for bayonet practice that evening or starved to death on rice.

Pretty soon the Jap officers came out and lined up before us in a flashy rank that made them look more than ever as if they had just dropped out of the trees and put some clothes on. A sorry-looking specimen with big rimmed glasses and a mouthful of tusks lectured us in even sorer English about the New Order in Asia and how we were interfering with it. He seemed pretty sore about the whole thing and we gathered that we had been interfering with it considerably. Finally he said we would stay where we were that night and go next day to a permanent prison camp. He grinned like a Gila monster over this last, giving the impression that the permanent prison camp wasn't so nice.

Then they squared off for the melodrama. They were going to give Old Base Point a chance to address his men for the last time and go out like a hero—their kind of hero, anyway. One Jap stepped up and offered Old Base Point his sword. This was for him to cut himself open with after he finished his talk with us and his settlement with his personal emperor. Old Base Point, though, took the sword and looked it over carefully. Then he ran his finger down the blade to see how sharp it was, the way he would have tested a new ax or a scythe.

"Good weapon," he told the battery just by way of general information, and handed it back to the Jap.

The emperor's boys were disgusted beyond telling at this. They sneered openly at a man who wouldn't perform even the little niceties for the President. You could tell they were figuring that if only a few million more like this stood in their way they would be in Washington by Christmas. They pulled themselves together, though, and waited halfheartedly to hear what swan song of allegiance would come from this degenerate specimen of America.

But Old Base Point fooled them again. He called the battery clerk and had him get the little old portable and the battery records from the supply truck. Then he pulled up a log and sat down to work. He had always done a thorough and me-

thodical job and he intended to wind up his command with a final statement as to the status of every man in the battery. He set to work, there in the heat and sweat and torture of defeat, and there wasn't a man of us who didn't want to tell him he had done a good job and it didn't make any difference about the records; that we would make out somehow and trust the folks back home to believe we had done our best.

I sat there feeling pretty blue, the idea of our predicament sinking home gradually until I wasn't very sure of myself anymore and seemed to know that what I had never let myself think about had finally turned out to be the real thing. I put it out of my mind, though, and somehow brought back enough fight to tell myself that I would never quit thinking that things wouldn't turn out all right. I could have dozed off a little then and rested some if it hadn't been for Old Base Point's typing. He had always used the hunt-and-peck method, but this afternoon it was more ragged than usual. I tried to think of the strain he must be under. We had always been just his boys. Good or bad, he'd treated us all like soldiers and men and it wasn't nice to have to sit there writing each name and staring out into our midst to find the white drawn face that would say another of his boys had come to the last long stretch of the road. Or not to find the man he wanted and know that he lay back there by our gun position and would be on the morning report but one more time.

This was weak sentiment to the Japs but it was an ache to our hearts that they could not understand. I quit looking at Old Base Point and turned my eyes away, a little misty, to see how the rest of the fellows were taking it. They were all just sitting there, staring off into space or tracing little patterns in the dirt while they thought of things on the other side of world that they might never see again.



I TURNED back to looking at the ground again and began to hate the sound of Old Base Point's typewriter. The noisy clicking and beating at the keys pounded into my brain like the chatter of a machine gun. It seemed as though I had

heard it over and over and that it would never cease. Over and over the keys said, *Beaten, beaten—lost, lost—death, death.* It sounded like a thousand far-off engine valves, the endless *click-click* of a train passing over long miles of rails or like the erratic tapping of a code sender.

Of a sudden I sat upright and came full awake. What had I said? Like the erratic tapping of a code sender? Yes, that was what it sounded like and more than that, it sounded just like Old Base Point's touch on the keys of our radio equipment. Feverishly I began to concentrate on the typewriter. I turned slowly and looked toward the radio section while I listened. Then I could have jumped up and yelled for what I saw.

The radio section was sitting there as still and quiet as the rest of us, but a lot busier. Sergeant O'Hara had a faraway look in his eyes as though he were listening to grand opera. Corporal Jones tapped his finger meditatively in the palm of his hand—a habit he picked up learning code. And the little Mexican from down in Texas had his mouth half open with a concentration that he only hit when he was working on radio. If you've ever been in a dark jungle, beaten and certain that the sun won't shine again for you, and then opened your eyes of a sudden to find the clouds drifting lazily above in a blue sky with everything light and cool and fresh, you know how I felt.

Old Base Point hadn't quit being dependable just because he was captured. He was typing his report all right, but he was doing something else besides. That erratic, nervous beating at the keys was dots and dashes and he was pounding it home to us in spite of a Jap bayonet at his back and the officers who sneered and laughed at the hopelessness of his command. Suddenly I could see my girl's face again and hear the old familiar voices back on Main Street.

I started keeping track of the *das* and *dits* as best I could. It was the real thing all right. BABY, it started. "Baby" was the radio call name of our battery. Then, FROM BASE POINT. It was a call from our battery commander using our nickname for him to identify himself. He was calling his battery, giving them a march order just like the hundreds of times be-

fore when he'd had the phone operator call down from his advanced position. Or the times when his voice had come down crisp and clear over the radio ordering us to move out. Then it had been by order of the battery commander. Today it was more personal. It was man to man. It was just Old Base Point calling his battery. The crazy, dependable old guy, I thought. So he knew all along about being "Old Base Point!" Well, he couldn't have put his order across any stronger nor made more certain that every man would put his whole heart in what he was told to do.

BABY FROM BASE POINT. I HAVE A MESSAGE FOR YOU. TONIGHT AT 2300—Old Base Point's typing went on and on. With never a glance at the guards or the Jap officers, he put his whole dependable nature into making that march order the most complete and the most spectacular he had ever written.

The sun had gone down and the mosquitoes and bugs were flying and crawling over the jungle blackness when the radio section whispered the message around through the battery. The Japs leaned wearily on their rifles or walked stupidly about us in the dark. There was no sound but the dull thud of their footsteps.

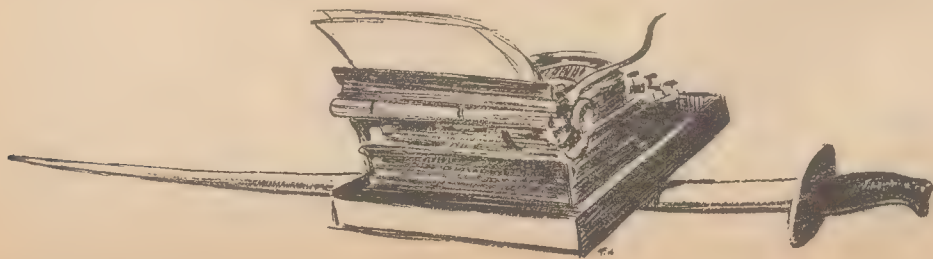
If you could have been watching us one minute before 2300 you would have seen eyes flash and muscles tense. You might have heard the deep intake of breath and sensed the volcanic suppression that hung like a cloud over nearly a hundred men. And then you would have heard a roar like a new wind coming in the trees—a roar that turned to a wild melee of stampeding men. You would have seen sentries knocked to their feet by surprise and a wall of surging force that rushed over them before they had time to shoulder their rifles. You would have seen the Jap officers popping from their little tents, shouting commands and firing in every

direction. There was yelling and cursing as men rushed to guns and trucks. Drivers leaped to cabs like pony express riders to their mounts. Men released gun brakes, piled over the sides into vehicles and hung like cats to the tubes of our guns. Everyone knew just where his place was. As dependable an officer as Old Base Point wouldn't leave out a thing.

Old Base Point's battery hit the stockade fence in a roar of speed which had started engines and made the vehicles plunge forward almost in one motion. Tons of trucks and guns took down the iron wire fence like a mad bull and roared through the jungle trees, knocking them down and lashing snipers off like pebbles from a slingshot. Sentries screamed under the wheels. Rifles cracked and swords flashed but Old Base Point's battery found the mountain road and kept going.

Later we all lined up again in the heat and sweat of another part of the jungle and watched a general pin a medal on Old Base Point. I tried to figure it all out, watching him there. His tie wasn't straight and his pants needed pressing but he looked like a hero to me. I guess I was able to see things the Japs couldn't. I could see, behind Old Base Point's easy-going ways, the determination that made him keep fighting when everything looked hopeless. I remembered him back on maneuvers in Louisiana, staying awake night after night, drinking GI coffee that would float a tire too, when the rest of us were dead with exhaustion. I remembered his telling me about the days when he was a kid back on the farm, the days when he had milked twenty cows before daylight.

The Japs couldn't see that, though, until it was too late. Maybe they couldn't have understood it, anyway. But I guess you rattle a better sword if you don't bother about being spectacular and just stay dependable.





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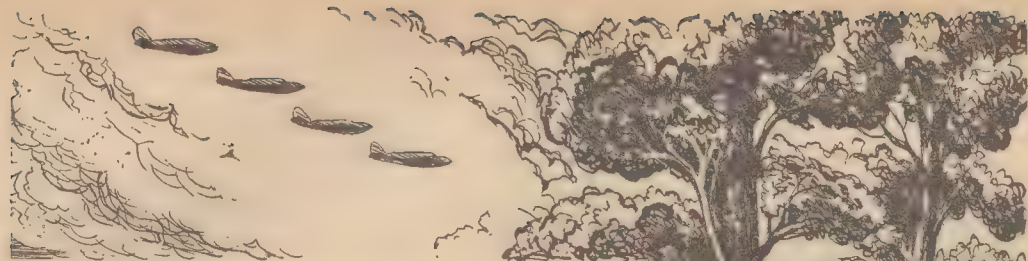
March ARGOSY now on sale



FOURTH GENERATION

By
FLORENCE
BURRILL
JACOBS

Not this last peace, nor the one before,
McGregor's Hughey came home from war
With the trigger finger blown off his hand
And a mighty thirst for a piece of land;
A piece of woods he could clear and plant,
And raise his house on the southern slant,
And shut out, maybe, behind the ridge
Sights he remembered from Concord Bridge. . .
His axe was stoked with the venison
And journeycakes Margaret baked him. One
After another the oaks would crash
To a ring of flame and a fertile ash;
But a row of young pines he left for shade.
(And glad enough of the ambuscade
When a scalplock showed on a furtive head.
Funny such polecats should all be red!
Redcoat . . . redskin . . . he fixed this one
Same as that other at Lexington.) . . .
Then later an owl mourned all night long
While Meg lay wrestling a foeman strong
As Injuns, and Hughey from pine to pine
Stumbled and prayed in the late starshine. . .
So, sharing McGregor alarms and jokes,
The saplings grew to be almost folks.



When young Hugh's treble was turning gruff
 His pa lay dead of a lung distress,
 But the Pines looked after him well enough.
 He took his nap on a warm brown bed
 And dodged from wrath to that giant spread,
 And brought his Betsy, one August night,
 Where he could court her proper and right. . .
 Another Hughey, securely rolled
 In a homespun shawl, and an hour old,
 Was borne for their blessing . . . The Wilderness
 Left Hugh too scrawny to farm much more,
 But able to smoke in the cabin door
 For a good long span, and decipher lines
 Of gospel comfort across his pines.

Hugh the third, he laid new, home-grown
 Timbers for sills, but the old doorstone
 And the trees he left . . . Why, The Pines by now
 Were part of the family, root and bough!
 Ankle-deep in the Argonne floods
 He'd hear them, sniff at the swelling buds.
 But there was the Rhine to police a spell,
 And after he'd finished the house and ell
 And married Agnes from up the pike
 He was middling old for a family, like.
 Later on . . . well, The Pines would stand
 To keep a watch on McGregor land.
 But when this fracas got underway,
 He fumed to Peter Kincaid one day,
 "It galls me not to have had a son
 A-rarin' and ready to fight this one!
 Here I be, crippled and eighty-two. . .
 If there was something that I could *do*!"
 "Wouldn't sell off your pines, I s'pose?"
 Got to get lumber for crates, or close."
 "Gramp's Pines? . . . Gorry, Pete, I donno."
 Hugh turned and swallowed and limped off, slow.
 But the second morning he stumped back in
 With his nose drawn peaked, his lips shut thin,
 And staring hard at the door behind
 Said, "Cut 'em anytime you've a mind."

Neat and trim from the plane and saw,
 The last McGregors are off to war.

DECORATION BY WALTER BUEHR



WATCH BELOW

By F. R. BUCKLEY

THE third engineer has the next watch—eight to midnight—and I'm going on watch with him.

At the moment, we're in the officers' messroom, at the far, or exalted, end of which the captain is drinking coffee with the first mate and the chief engineer. Oil

and water used not to mix, and engineers and deck officers used to mess separately; but something's changed all that—possibly the war. Possibly someone's noticed that deck crowd and black gang drown or fly skyward in very similar manners, and it's established a bond of fellowship.



Not that anybody's thinking of either eventuality just now.

The captain, actually, is returning thanks for the fact that we have no women passengers.

"Funny," he says in his deep voice, looking around for corroboration, "but a couple of women aboard here—even one woman—would spoil the whole damn voyage."

"That's right," says the gunnery officer.

"Imagine," says the purser into his coffee-cup, "the first engineer having to talk respectably at mealtimes. He'd probably burst."

"We'd never have heard that yarn about the winch-driver at Murmansk," says the captain. "Say, I wonder if that was true. About the pork chops and tomatoes, I mean."

"They *do* have women driving winches at Murmansk," says the second mate. "That's true, anyhow."

"'Overalls and all,'" quotes the Third,

from the uncensored memoirs of the First. He rises laughing, wipes his mouth on the back of his hand and with old-fashioned Southern courtesy says that if I'm coming below with him I'd better be getting the hell along. He really is Southern, despite a snub nose, the name of Grady, and blue eyes twinkling in a face like the map of Ireland. He runs true to type, too, in that his open shirt-neck discloses a gleam of silver chain. We're all running true to type in this ship—a type older than the age of reason. Not a man aboard—probably not a man in this whole convoy—but has something hanging about his neck; some medal or charm to ward off misfortune and a dogtag giving his name, in case the charm doesn't work. The Army officer chaperoning our deck cargo has a four-leaf clover; never mind what I've got; the Third has four dubious silver saints.

"Mah little daughter gave 'em to me," he says as we walk down the alley toward the engine-room fiddle. "She says to me, 'Now, Daddy, don' go an' get yo'self sunk!' and Ah says to her, 'Don' you worry, honey—with fo' saints on watch at the same time, nothin' goin' happen to me.' Guess she's chewin' St. Anthony's ear off for me every day. Mah mother'n wife, too—they're very pious. Ah'm the only heathen in the family. You ain't wearin' rubber-soled shoes, are you?"

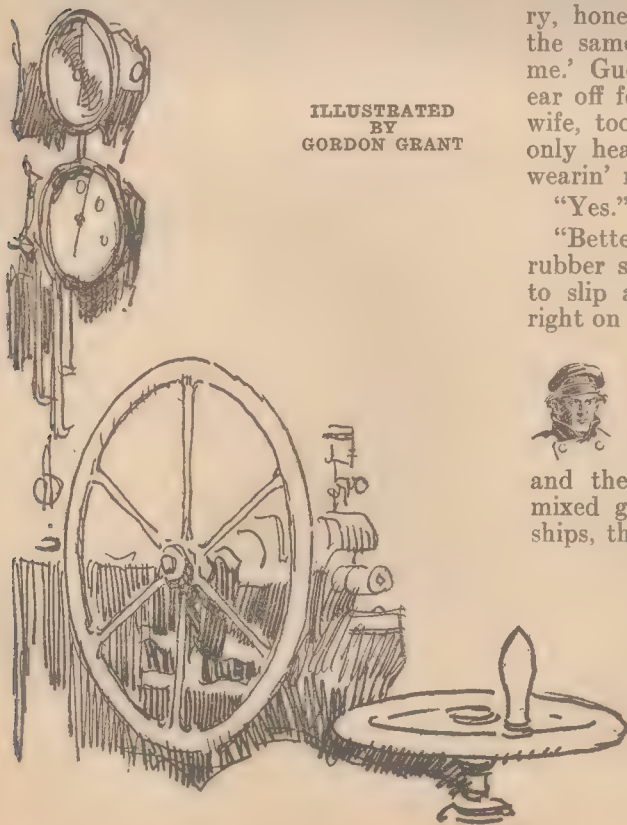
"Yes."

"Better change 'em. You dassent wear rubber soles around the engines. Liable to slip an' somethin' catch you. Come right on down when you're ready."



THE way to the engine room is through the 'tween-decks, where dim blue lights shine on the bellies of the alarm gongs and the air smells of perspiration and mixed groceries. Nowadays, in Liberty ships, the crews live four to a cabin; but

"When it's all over—man, won't that be a day! Ah'm gonna build me a little house by a crick—Ah've got all the plans right here."



ILLUSTRATED
BY
GORDON GRANT

their greater number of possessions or the higher standard of literacy or something makes these rooms considerably more confused than the average old-time foc'sle. It's cold topside—the man at the naked wheel is shivering inside two suits of long-handled underwear; but down here the steam heat's doing an excessive job and every room is a tangle of bare limbs and tattered editions of the comics. One chap who's to be hot-shell man on the three-inch gun if we go into action, and who spent this forenoon peeling spuds in his new tin hat, is sitting up in bed still wearing his battle-bowler and spelling out *Superman* with the aid of his thumb. Others are playing poker or monopoly. The only old-timer—he who threw the bowline so expertly around my suitcase when we came aboard—is standing by a blackout screen smoking a clay pipe.

"They can't stick my tobacco," he says, jerking his thumb toward the novices.

"Nor speak your language, either?"

He winks a pale blue eye and spits out into the darkness.

"Not for another twenty years," says he. "Goin' below?"

The engine-room door is just beyond him, in the thwart-ships alley.

"Sure. Why not?"

"Go ahead!" says the old-timer, waving his pipe generously. "I'll just stay right here."

Through that low door in the warm iron wall there is a smell of oil. There's a blast of hot air, too, which blows your hair upright on your head. And, best of all to the engine-minded man, there's the booming trample of triple-expansion cylinders at their work. Turbines are all very well; their thermodynamic efficiency is beyond dispute and they give you an engine room like a pasteurizing plant—

"Which is all very well if you like milk," as the first engineer puts it. "I don't, myself. And when them windmills break down they break all the way down, whereas with plenty of spit and hair-pins you can always fix these up-and-down jobs to get you back to port."

You look down, from here, on the cylinder-heads of this up-and-down job, diminishing from low to high, with the

fat white snakes of the port and star-board main steamlines, writhing toward them through the gloom. Under these and around them are mazes of lesser piping, branched out from the steam-tree with its confusion of hand-wheels. To each side the massive tunnels of the ventilating shafts soar into the darkness. But it's those main steamlines that hold your eye as you go down the ladder.

The air is almost too hot to breathe; the handrails make your palms shrink; a rivulet of sweat begins to run down your spine—and it's the main steam that's doing it. Those twin pipes are swaddled in asbestos and they're fifty feet away, but inside them is four-hundred-and-fifty-degree steam at two hundred-odd pounds pressure to the square inch; and, whole as the lines now are, they can't keep it all to themselves. They radiate a sweltering, ominous heat. And if anything should happen—such as a torpedo or a quite small shell through the engine room—they'd break, most likely, and fill the atmosphere with invisible death. A man where I stand now—on the upper grating, with the cylinder-head chain hoist swaying majestically above me—would be shriveled like a cigarette-paper in a blast furnace. Men who have come within scalding-distance of a mere gasket-leak have been scarred for life; and most engineers have seen such. That's why they have a proverb: "Blow me up or drown me, but God in His mercy preserve us from live steam." That's why there's a steel door on the mouth of the shaft-alley—as far as possible away from those sweltering white snakes; that's why, from the footplate itself, monkey-ladders of steel cable rise through the ventilators.

The third engineer is standing by one of these, talking to the engine-room cadet. He said at mess yesterday that he'd shinned up this ladder to see how it worked, and took a poor view of it.

"Come that old tin fish, though," he added reflectively, "an' I'll bet you I'd be up it like a rat up a spout. Yes, suh! 'Overalls an' all.'"



THAT extract from the first engineer's quite unprintable idyll at Murmansk has become a ship's gag; so has the Polish steward's version of the word "fricassee";



"They can't stick my tobacco," says the old-timer, motioning toward the novices.

so has the captain's reply to the ordinary seaman who called him "Cap." He invited the seaman to be really pally—to call him Jim, call him Bill, and to get out of his presence before he bent a censored plate over his unmentionable head. We laugh consumedly at these things. We're a happy ship. Anyhow, a whole lot happier than we may be any minute from now.

The height of the cylinders is six steel steps. At the foot of these is the lower grating, on a level with the crossheads flashing up and down in their guides. It's cooler here; there's even a bit of a breeze from the flying steel. Down from the crossheads—shining square knee-joints weighing half a ton each—extend the crank-rods, thick as a man's leg and moving like the thighs of a giant on a bicycle. An oiler's at work on them now—one hand for himself, the other for the ship—leaning over the guard-rail to replenish the crosshead cups.

We're doing sixty revolutions. This is a fast convoy; they need the stuff in Sicily. The ship is rolling, and Joe must

catch the cups as they pause for the fraction of a second at the top of each stroke. Moving from the high-pressure cylinder to the intermediate, the oiler doesn't look aside.

He's in timing with the engine now—and he'd better stay so till all three crossheads are oiled and he can go down to the footplate. If he misses his timing, and is lucky, he'll get his wrist broken; if he misses his grip and doesn't rate a miracle, he'll be trampled into raspberry jam in the crank-pit.

Even if stopping the engines would do him any good—which it couldn't—we shouldn't dare stop until morning. It's a very black night outside. Ahead of us is a ship loaded with high explosive. Astern of us is worse—a tanker loaded with high-octane gasoline. And tankers don't like to be jostled. They burst and vomit fire. We have breakdown lights rigged ready on the bridge in case something really should go wrong; but nobody knows what would happen if, for instance, we broke our tail-shaft and they had to be used. We're middle ship in a middle column of this



There was the ordinary seaman who called the captain "Cap" got invited to . . .

convoy. Each ship astern would have to change course to avoid us—and they might manage to do it without barging into the next column or into each other, or they might not. Anyhow, we couldn't put them to that trouble for the sake of one dead man.

"Hi! What the hell?" the third engineer calls up. "You gonna roost up there? Come on down!"

He is leaning against the desk, and the soles of his shoes are twenty feet below the water-line and his surroundings are peculiar. On the bridge, even by night, one has a variety of things to look at—soft things, cool things, like the dark sky with the stars in it, the black sea where it's churned up by the fog-buoy of the ship ahead, the dim figure of the helmsman silhouetted against the binnacle light. Down here, everything is hard, shiny and hot. The floors are steel, the ladders are steel, the desk is steel, the sides of the

ship, curving inward behind mazes of auxiliary machinery, are steel under their buff paint; and in the middle is the apotheosis of steel at sea, the engine.

Its port and starboard columns tower up from the footplate, and wheels, levers and dials cluster about the bases of them like ferns about the boles of forest trees. That big wheel is the reverse gear, and above it are the gauges of pressures in the three great cylinders. Just round the corner, facing the big brass dial of the engine-room telegraph, is the throttle, with the lever of the butterfly valve sticking out below it. The telegraph stands at "Half Speed Ahead," but the throttle is wide open; we're running on the butterfly, which is really designed to check the racing of the propeller when we pitch. We're not pitching this trip—too heavily loaded—but we're changing speed, up or down a revolution, every few minutes.

The telephone from the bridge rings now and the Third, answering it, intones, "Increase one," and toys delicately with the butterfly lever. The engine-room cadet trots over to the revolution-counter again and stands with one hand on the tripping rod and eyes fixed on the sweep second-hand of the clock.

"Let's go feel a bearin' or so," says the Third, sociably.

He lays aside his cigar. You don't smoke when you're feeling bearings because it's necessary to smell as well as feel. You start methodically with the high-pressure eccentrics, great discs bathed in slime and moving greasily together like Pilate washing his hands. Then you move around the starboard forward column to the high-pressure cranks.

There's a trick to feeling bearings. Aside from the diagnostic feature, it takes timing and instinctive judgment of distance. Time was, before crack liners had changed to turbines, when the Cunard had its crank-webs painted scarlet for better visibility and the bright rods that drove them cleaned (it was said) with silver-polish. Nevertheless, when a rubber mat was laid down along the *Carmania's* crank-pit guard-rail, there was an epidemic of barked knuckles among her engineers. They'd been raised half an inch from their accustomed position and miscalculated the fly of the webs.

This ship's cranks are painted black,

and the Third is making his first trip with them. It is accordingly his technique to lean well over and play paddy-paw with each five tons of flying steel, like a kitten playing with a ball. The high-pressure is running cool—though it feels hot to me when I take a grope at it and get my knuckles rapped by twenty-five hundred horse-power—but it isn't "bad hot"; neither are the intermediate or low.



AND that brings us back to the thrust-block, which really drives the ship. It takes the thrust of the propeller, and aforetime it used to be an imposing structure, gaudy with brass collars and streaming with expensive lubricant. Now, by the magic of a mathematical formula, it's been shrunk to the size and shape of a five-horse electric motor, and takes the whole drive of the screw on a wedge-shaped film of oil. Lascar stokers, black with oil and with white tear-marks down their cheeks, used to pray to the old thrust-blocks; but as the blocks have changed, so also has the unchanging East. It just happens that at this moment our only Oriental, Hu Sed Dat, a fireman-water-tender in a clean white shirt, steps right over the Kingsbury thrust on his way to the port side. He's Chinese. Nobody seems to know his real name, but he's said to have a degree from Columbia.

"They just put this door on the shaft-alley this trip," says the Third.

It's a steel door—open when a notice says it must be kept closed—giving on a dim vista of the ship's ribs and the propeller-shaft turning smoothly on its bearings. Crouching, one can walk aft along this tunnel to the great bolted stuffing-box that keeps the sea out. This is the bottom of the ship and the end of the ship, and just outside is the propeller carving seventeen-foot chunks out of the sea and hurling them behind it. Just beyond the steel wall are whirlpools and confusion in the icy water. One is apt to shiver in the warmth of the alley, pat the phlegmatic shaft and make back toward the cheerful clangor of the engines.

A steel ladder shoots up out of the tunnel. It goes to the deck, and that steel door which has just been installed is designed to give us time to get to it and up it, away from water and live



" . . . Be really pally, just call me Jim—and get the hell out of my sight before—"

steam in case anything should happen. The point is—and so many things remind one of it—that even in peacetime, things are never very far away from happening in the engine room. Everlastingly, the imprisoned steam bides its time, working away at steel and packings against the time when it can regain its freedom—and God help the man who's in its way when it does. Rather like occupied Europe.

In wartime, any little accident can upset the balance of forces and let all hell loose in every direction. The whole maze of pipes around us as we stroll forward is at the whim of some perfect stranger letting go a tin fish at random. This convoy covers miles of ocean; the multiple beat of its screws must betray it to every submarine within range. It seems as though any torpedo let loose in the whole

North Atlantic must hit one ship or another—like shooting fish in a barrel. But nothing happens. Maybe Churchill was right about that new trick in the Battle of the Atlantic. Maybe our captain really has the Indian sign on submarines. He says he has.

Anyhow, the Third makes a note in the rough log and resumes his cigar.

"You know, Ah think the first engineer really was in love with that winch-driver at Murmansk," he says.

"Overalls and all? The one he gave the pork chops to?"

"Yeah. Them gals weren't allowed to speak to us foreigners, really, but she couldn't resist those chops. He tried to go for a walk with her once, tried to make himself look like a Russian so's nobody would notice—him with that Mick puss, mind you—but what with her speakin' no English an' him speakin' no Russian, an' both of 'em havin' to dive into snow-drifts ever' time a plane come over, the co'tship didn't progress so well, Ah understood. Anyhow, he was awful moody comin' home, an' now he makes more fun of the thing than is natural. Leanin' over backwards. Like the first time Ah was blown out of an engine room—next trip Ah stayed down there off watch as well as on; it was either that or stay out of the engine room for keeps."

"Couldn't you have got a job ashore?"

"Oh, yeah—indeed, Ah had one. Leadin' rigger in a shipbuildin' yard. The wife liked that, but Ah was all fidgety. Somebody's got to run these ships after they're built, an'—well, I came to sea again."

The cadet comes over, rubs "60" off the blackboard and scrawls "61."



"Boy, am I good with that butterfly valve!" says the Third admiringly. "Right on the beezer—sixty-one. Now wait—they'll ring down again, increase one, reduce one, some damn thing. So long as that bell up there doesn't sound off, though, we got lots to be thankful for."

He means the big general-alarm gong, with its placard: "When This Bell Rings, Report To Your Station."

"Ever heard it?"

"Not in this ship; but, hell, man, that isn't the half of it! Come an attack, that

damn thing goes off like the end of the world, an' the telegraph theah starts ringin' 'Full Speed Ahead' over an' over again, an' the telephone starts buzzin' for extra steam, an' down comes the chief engineer in his pajamas, an' the whistle's blowin' short an' long blasts—depends whether it's a surface attack or them damn planes. An' then the guns start goin'—Oh, man! Well, maybe you'll hear it for yourself. We're just gettin' into the danger zone now. Feel nervous atall?"

"Not yet."

"Well, you will. Comes on quite sudden. Just last watch, Ah was standin' over theah by the main condenser, happy as Hooligan, thinkin' about a party we had in New York just before we sailed, when suddenly Ah felt a torpedo comin' straight for mah kidneys. About a hundred yards away, Ah judged it was, but comin' fast. One of them new electric kind that don't show where they are. Ah could reg'larly see the nasty, mean' expression on its front end. Boy, Ah had to glue my feet to that gratin', so's not to move away from theah; because once you feel like that an' *do* move, you're finished. Ol' Man Superstition's got you down; you gonna have hunches till you're no damn good at all. Co'se, with you it's different; you ain't got to stay down heah to earn your livin'."

"But there wasn't any torpedo."

"No; but if theah had been, it'd been better for me to stay theah an' get killed, than to live on scared to death, if you catch mah meanin'. Bein' dead's all over at once; bein' afraid of dyin' lasts all yo' life. Excuse me a moment."

The fireman was gesturing for aid with one of the furnace nozzles. The Third, with an instinctive, unconscious glance at all his gauges, walked over and consulted with him about it. Ten to one, had he been asked what pressure was on the intermediate cylinder, let alone the high and the low, he would not have been able to answer. Ask a man who's just looked at his watch what time it is, and he won't know. But he will know whether he's late for anything, or whether he has time on his hands. So the Third knew that all was well with his engines.

He looked very small, standing there just forward of the great columns. I joined

him and the fireman under the arch of the boiler-breasts and felt rather small myself. This place was very different from the stokeholds when coal was king. No bulkhead divided it from the engine room; no coal lay underfoot to trip the unwary and fling him against a red-hot door. Instead of gangs of naked devils lit by hell-fire, there was this calm and comparatively cool Chinese—holding, instead of shovel or slice-bar, a couple of feet of bronze tubing. Instead of hoses spraying down the clinkers in clouds of steam, here was a mild-looking bucket of water in which more bronze nozzles reposed.

But the boilers were still there—thirteen tons of scalding water behind a fraction of an inch of steel. Boilers have an oppressive quality. They overhang. They used to overhang, black, grimy and menacing, in the dark of the old stokeholds, and the fact that they're painted cream now and brilliantly lit with electricity doesn't make the difference one might expect.

"What's that thing over there?" I inquire, pointing to the main feed pump.



THE Third looks at me, wrinkles his eyes in a smile and takes me by the elbow.

"We'll just go over an' look at it," he says comfortingly. "We'll go round the auxiliaries. That's the main feed—as you know. . . Funny thing how different folks dislike different things. Some fellers don' like to go through man-holes. Believe it or not, Ah've known old-timer engineers that just hated the shaft-alley. Then again, there's lots o' folks get nervous standin' under the boiler-breasts where we were a minute ago. . . This heah's the main fire-pump. We'll be usin' it for drill tomorrow, I expect. This is the circulatin' pump, heah's all the refrigeratin' machinery—an' of co'se up theah are the dynamos an' the main switchboard. Man, man, them deck officers don' know they're born! We got all these things on our mind, an' last night, too, Ah had to go up an' fix the washer on the captain's hot-water faucet."

We get back to the desk. The Third glances again at the clock and all his gauges.

"Sixty-one," he reads off the black-

board. "Heigho! Lots o' revolutions between heah an' England—'fore the captain rings 'Finished With Engine' on that ol' telegraph. After a bad crossin' they ring it all over the dial a dozen times, an' man, man, we answer back till that ol' chain pret' near comes out o' the machine by the roots! Do you remember the Armistice Day after the last war?"

"And how!"

"It's kind o' like that, the end of every trip. You don't know how keyed up you've been till it's over. When it's all over—man, won't that be a day! Ah'm gonna stay ashore for a yeah, gonna build me a little house by a crick Ah know of, an' just fish and grow vegetables, an'—Ah got the plans o' the house right here. Sketched 'em mahself. Like to see 'em?"

He glances again at all his gauges, then takes a roll of paper from behind the boiler-water test-tube rack and spreads it out on the desk-top.

"It'll stand in this kinda little grove o' pines, you see," he expounds. "Right here's the crick; and right here is mah livin' room that's gonna be twenty by fifteen, lookin' out on the water. Now Ah figure that this window heah—"

Somebody outside in the dark water hits the ship a blow with a gigantic hammer. That's what it sounds like. That's what it feels like, too. The floorplates underfoot, vibrating with the pulse of the engines, give a violent tremor and the engine room rings like a bell. An instant later comes a roar and the lights flicker.

"Depth charges," says the Third, his thumb still on the plan of his little house.

"Near?"

"Neah? No, suh?" says the Third, in a loud voice. "That'd be a couple miles away. Maybe more. Escort vessels practisin', most likely."

There is another roar, another, another, and the lights flicker again.

"Heigho!" says the Third. "Some old sub nosin' around. We're in the danger-zone now. Yessuh, I guess our trials have begun. Reminds me—did you heah that story about the second mate who—"

It's a good story and he tells it very well; we laugh until I am almost sick.

But when I recover, I notice that the Third has rolled up that plan of his house and dropped it into the desk drawer.



The crypt with its Norman arches had an air of unreality in the glow of the single lamp...

TRAITOR UNKNOWN

By M. V. HEBERDEN

THE STORY THUS FAR:

WHEN leaks start occurring in the well-organized underground network MAJOR MICHAEL BRANDON of British Intelligence had set up to aid the Allies after France's sur-

render, Brandon's chief, COLONEL SMITHSHAND, orders him to find the leak—which seems to be among the higher-ups—and plug it. After conferring with RODOPIN, ex-publisher and advisor to British Intelligence on French matters, and with ST. PAUL, liaison man



... Brandon took out the list and began to read slowly. "These are the traitors—"

between the Underground and the French in London, Brandon sets out with LIEUTENANT FRANK KNIGHT, young American working with B.I., for north-western France—Zone One of the underground—where the trouble seems to be. He has nine days in which to discover and remove the traitor and to issue instructions to the underground regarding the part it is to play in a forthcoming large-scale Commando raid.

As a precaution against possible betrayal, Brandon and Knight parachute to

earth a few miles from the TISSIER farm, the spot arranged for their arrival, and their plane is shot down by German anti-aircraft a few moments later. Also deviating from prearranged plans, Brandon takes Knight to the home of PAPA CIBAULT, tobacco shop proprietor, who forges credentials for the underground. There Brandon has Knight's picture and description transferred to his own papers and obtains for himself the identification papers of one PIERRE DESGRANGES, mathematics professor of Rouen, with a

permit to travel. Then he sends Knight, posing as Brandon, to the JOSSERAND farm, center of the underground's courier service to London.

Knight, impersonating the major, tries to find out if their arrival has been made known to the Gestapo. At the farm he meets PAPA and MAMA JOSSERAND, and CHARLES BUISSON, LUCIEN AMIARD and ACHILLE DUPRE, their sons-in-law, who live with them. While he talks to them, it is learned that the Tissier farm was raided at the time Brandon was supposed to land; then they discover that the Gestapo is watching the Josserand house. Distrustful because of recent betrayals, the Josserand family decides to hold a summary trial and execution of Knight as a Nazi *agent provocateur*.

Brandon in the meantime has gone to see MAURICE ARNAUDET, ancient plumbing contractor and district chief in the underground. While he is there, TELEMAQUE BORDAGES, young power-plant engineer in charge of the underground's communications with England, arrives to report that a spy is about to be executed at the Josserand farm. Guessing what has happened, Brandon sends Télémaque there just in time to save Knight's life. Brandon hides outside and kills the Gestapo man watching the house.

That evening Brandon goes to see ANDREE SANTRIEUL, nightclub entertainer with whom he fell in love when he was setting up the underground and who is working with both British Intelligence and the French underground. She is now a singer at the Café Persan and the mistress of COLONEL EHRWAHLT, local Nazi commandant. Her back is still scarred from a near-lynching perpetrated on her by some townsmen led by Lucien Amiard because of her convincing portrayal of a collaborationist. She has no information about the leaks and mentions that a man named DAUDET has recently been through the district checking up for St. Paul, but he was also unable to discover their source.

Before Brandon leaves the café, he meets Colonel Ehrwahlt, to whom he is introduced as "Pierre Desgranges," an old friend of Andrée's. Then he returns to his hotel and learns from Knight that every-

one in the Josserand household has been arrested and a 50,000-franc reward is being offered for the apprehension of "Michael Brandon, English spy, dead or alive." Shortly after they retire, Knight, in his room next to Brandon's, hears the Gestapo arrive and arrest the major.

PART II

TWO huge trucks of a portable power plant were drawn up outside the Gestapo headquarters, chugging away with monotonous rhythm. Inside the carefully guarded and blacked-out doors, lights glared with painful brilliance.

The six-guard escort that had come to the Grand Hotel had been very polite to Brandon, which only made him more uneasy. Their politeness continued as they led him down a long corridor into a completely empty little room and told him to wait. Lights blazed from the ceiling and glared back from the whitewashed walls. There wasn't a stick of furniture. The sole decoration was a red painted sign, *NICHT RAUCHEN*. An armed guard was stationed at each of the two doors.

Brandon considered them for a moment in silence. They would have their orders: No speaking to the prisoner. Useless to try to learn from them why he had been brought. He leaned against the wall for what seemed like half an hour but he knew was only about ten minutes, and nothing happened. They might keep him waiting indefinitely; keeping people waiting makes them nervous, particularly when they don't know why they've been arrested. It makes them tired, too, and it's easier then to catch a tired person in a lie. He looked at the floor; it was polished wood and spotlessly clean. He sat down.

"*Verboten! Stehe auf!*" The guard opposite came a few steps towards him.

"I thought we were probably here for the night," he said without rancor and got up obediently. He went to the corner of the room, wedged his shoulders across it and looked expectantly at the guards. But neither of them moved or spoke. Evidently it was not *verboten* to support walls. Two hours passed.

Another guard appeared and took him

into an office where a young lieutenant with a fixed smile said that he was sorry that he had been kept waiting, and might he see his papers? Brandon handed them over without comment and remained standing.

"You speak German, Monsieur Desgranges?"

"Yes."

"Ach, that is good." He beckoned the two guards who were just inside the door. "Search him." Then he turned the fixed smile back to Brandon. "A routine precaution, you understand."

The "routine precaution" was thorough and annoying. The lining of his coat was slit open, the bands of his trousers and shorts were ripped apart and his collar was completely wrecked. The young lieutenant looked at the shirt and shorts, seeking a maker's name. They were of an inexpensive type which could be bought, before the war, anywhere in France; Smithshand's bureau had seen to that. The lieutenant circled around Brandon without speaking. "You have a great many scars on your body," he said at last.

"There was a war in 1914," replied Brandon, thanking God that Pierre Desgranges had had a long and distinguished war record which might account for the scars.

"They are not mentioned." The lieutenant pointed to the distinguishing marks space on the identity card.

"It is not customary to list marks that cannot be seen when one is dressed."

"That doesn't look twenty-five years old to me." He flicked a ruler at a long, jagged cicatrice.

"It has been operated on twice since. The surgeons in those days were hurried and not always very good."

The lieutenant nodded. "Give him his clothes," he ordered the guards. Brandon dressed slowly. There was one chair in the room beside the desk seat occupied by the lieutenant, but it was evidently not meant to be sat upon, for it was piled high with green metal file boxes.

"Where was your mother born?" The question shot out like a bullet from a gun.

Behind the lieutenant was a gigantic portrait of Hitler. Brandon stared at it, but his eyes were seeing the sheets of paper containing the personal details of

Pierre Desgranges' life that he had hastily memorized that morning at Papa Cibault's. "Port Vendres," he said.

It went on for a little over an hour. Who was the principal of the school where he taught? Where had he himself been to school? What degrees had he? What regiment had he served with in the last war? Who had been his colonel? The adjutant? Some of it had been in the paper Cibault had given him, some of it he had to invent—invent and remember, for he must not contradict himself.

He was passed on to another lieutenant, equally young, the only difference being that this one didn't smile. Still there was no seat available. The lieutenant said, "Your mother was born in St. Cloud?"

"*Nein, Herr Leutnant.* Port Vendres." And so it went for another hour. Trick questions, some right, some wrong; questions that kept his brain at peak tension. But still he was being treated with kid gloves and he knew it.

Back to the bare and furnitureless waiting room. There was another pair of guards on duty now; they had changed at eight A.M. and it was now a quarter to nine. He had been there nearly five hours. At half past ten, he was conducted to a tiny office where a wizened little man questioned him about mathematics in school curricula.

By midday his head was splitting and his whole body ached with fatigue. But the inquisition went on. He was routed back to the smiling lieutenant. At almost every office to which he was taken there was a fifteen-minute wait outside the door, always standing. The smiling young man said, "There were a few things that I wanted to clarify. Now you said your mother was born in St. Cloud?"

"Port Vendres, *Herr Leutnant*," Brandon repeated.

They went through it all again, ending up with detailed questions about his family's home in Lille, the streets of Lille and the shops, and he thanked heaven that Pierre Desgranges' family lived in a town he knew. He answered each question exactly, and without comment. At no time was any mention made of underground activities, sabotage, or the English spy for whose apprehension, dead or

alive, the Reich was willing to pay fifty thousand francs.



KNIGHT knew that the sensible thing to do was to get some sleep, which he needed badly, and wait until morning before trying to find out anything. It was four o'clock when the tramping feet of the Gestapo had died away and though there was not actually any curfew in the town at the moment, it creates comment if one goes into the streets at that hour. It would be hard to explain to a patrol. He would do Brandon no service by getting himself arrested also. Quite what he could do for his chief he didn't know, though prisoners of the Gestapo *had* been rescued once in a great while; but not from as strong a headquarters as this one. Knight also knew that Brandon would want him to get on with the job and not waste time in a futile attempt to aid him. He felt a bit sick when he lay down on his bed again. The major had known what to expect, if they knew who he was.

To his own surprise, Knight did sleep for a couple of hours. He had been pretty tired. But eight o'clock saw him dressed, shaved in cold water, unwashed because even the cold water supply was strictly limited, and en route to Arnaudet. The old plumber listened and shook his head.

"There is nothing we can do. I will try to find out where they have taken him." He was silent a while, looking into the younger man's face. "You need not be afraid he will talk. Or perhaps you are afraid for him?"

"I'm afraid for him," answered Knight promptly and realized that he had not even considered it a possibility that Brandon could be made to talk.

The old man nodded. "He is a brave man," he said. "I will try to find out what I can. Come back this afternoon."

Knight drifted down to police headquarters and for a while stood with the apathetic little knot of people. They might have been the same people, as indeed some of them were, who had been there the night before. He wasn't doing any good there, he told himself impatiently. He had a job to do and he'd better get about it. He went to Télémaque Bordages' house.

The woman who answered the door looked at him suspiciously and pushed wisps of gray hair back from her face. "He's out at work," she said shortly.

"What time does he come home?"

"Who are you?" demanded the woman.

"I was using the papers of Georges Boutry yesterday."

The suspicion faded a trifle. "He's usually home around five. Five to five, they work him," she continued. "Tonight he may be late on account of the damage done by the raid."

"I'll come back then, if I may."

He was about to go when a voice he had heard before said, "Who is it?"

"Friend of Télémaque's." She was closing the door, but Knight had caught a glimpse of Achille Dupré's pale face.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"Who? Oh, it's you." A faint smile flitted for an instant across the man's face and was gone. "So they were wrong about you. Lucky they found it out before they shot you." A note of self-derision crept into his voice. "I'm trying to get news of Michelette."

"Is she—"

"Don't stand there talking. If you're going to talk, come in. I'm Télémaque's aunt." She pulled Knight inside the door and closed it behind him.

"Arrested. With the others." Achille drew him into a room on the right. "All of them. I had gone out, as you know. When I was returning to the house, I saw the Gestapo cars. A friend who was with me pulled me into a doorway, so I am here instead of in a Gestapo cell, monsieur. Letting my wife do the fighting for me, as you see."

"But what are you doing here?"

"I came in the hope that Télémaque might be able to find out something. He is one of them. And he loves Michelette."

"Haven't you any idea what's happened to them?" asked Knight.

"She is only a child, fired with the youthful desire to immolate herself on some altar—any altar. There is war and conquest, so the altar is France. Had she lived in another age it would have been religion." Achille ignored the question: he was talking almost to himself. "At first it was because she didn't know what life had to offer. Then Télémaque came and

she began to learn. But Télémaque is bound up, heart and soul, in the struggle. He would sacrifice the whole town if he thought it would help. They both worship at the same shrine."

"But you don't," said Knight.

"Only through submission do we learn truth."

"I don't agree with you," said the American bluntly.

"What is accomplished by force?"

"A hell of a lot."

"Only the destruction of the one who uses it."



KNIGHT was not philosophically minded, nor did he have a flair for abstract discussions.

With a view to bringing the conversation back to earth, he said, "One would think you'd feel differently about it with your wife in their hands."

"One's beliefs are not so easily changed, monsieur," answered Achille.

"Perhaps not. But at least, I should think you'd be ready to go and fight for her." In spite of himself a note of contempt crept into his voice.

"I would give my life for her," the Frenchman answered simply. "You probably don't believe that. It doesn't matter. But it is true."

And somehow Knight knew that it was. He said, "But not for your country, evidently."

"I would give my life, monsieur, if it would be of the least use to the people. But I would not give the lives of others."

The American was silent. He remembered Brandon once saying, "It's easy to go out and die but when you send other men to their death, you'll know what suffering is."

"You knew that Major Brandon was being sent from England, didn't you?" he asked at last.

"Yes."

"Why? You're not one of them."

"Lucien blurted it out. He had heard a lot of stories about the major and admired his ruthlessness. He couldn't resist saying to me, 'Now we'll find out who has been betraying us.' He suspects me. No," he corrected himself, "I don't think he really does. But he likes to pretend he does." The faint, bitter smile twisted

his lips again. "It points his contempt for me."

"Lucien is dangerous if he can't control his tongue," Knight said angrily. "Broadcasting the information when he knew damn well that the Gestapo would give their eye teeth to get their hands on the major."

"They won't, according to Lucien," replied Achille. "He's too clever for them. You see, monsieur, this Englishman has become a legend."

"I know all that. It's an additional reason for Lucien to have kept his mouth shut. If he told you, he may have told a hundred others, including the police," retorted Knight bitterly.

"I don't like Lucien, monsieur," said Achille slowly, "but I don't think he would deliberately do anything to imperil your major. He knows what they would do to him."

"D'you remember whether a description of Brandon was furnished when word was sent that he was coming?"

"A description? No, monsieur, I do not think so. You can, of course, ask Télémaque. He will have received the communication. He would know."

Knight was back again where he started. Three people could have described the major. Cibault's loyalty had been proved in the last war. Arnaudet was a district chief and if a district chief were a traitor, it would mean that the whole thing would have to be rebuilt and there wouldn't be time for that before— His thoughts stopped there. There was the woman.

CHAPTER VII

THE WEB TIGHTENS



AS HE left Télémaque's house, saying that he would return later in the hope of finding the power plant employee, Knight was oppressed with, for him, an unusual sense of helplessness. He was going in a circle. Time was getting shorter and he didn't even know where to begin. He went into a small, uninviting café and had an even more uninviting meal than the appearance of the place had led him to expect. As he was finishing, two off-duty

members of the Élite Guard came and sat at a table behind him. They were discussing the reward offered for the English spy.

"I could use the money," one was saying.

"Bah, we would not get it," answered the other.

"But the poster said—" began the first.

"That is to make his confederates betray him."

"But in his speech Captain Brundt said it would be paid."

"Captain Brundt is obsessed by this Englishman. For the past two days he's talked about nothing else. He stormed up and down his office yesterday for fifteen minutes, saying what he'd do to him. He must have lain awake all night, thinking up fancy tortures for him."

"But then surely he would see that the money is paid." The first one was not interested in the fate of the spy but only in the financial benefit that might accrue to himself.

"Not to us," the second told him firmly. "We'd get a medal. And they don't buy anything." He flicked the series of ribbons on his chest.

For a moment Knight was tempted to try to talk to them to see whether he could learn anything. They sounded bribable. Reluctantly he came to the conclusion that it would be too dangerous. Inquiries as to where Pierre Desgranges was being held would attract too much attention to Monsieur Desgranges, especially since he was supposed to be a stranger in town. He wondered when the two Élite Guards had left their headquarters, and took comfort in the thought that Brandon's identity could not have been discovered, otherwise they would not be discussing the reward. His comfort was slight for he knew that the Gestapo was famous for not letting its right hand know what the left was doing. They might have a prisoner for days or even weeks without the Élite Guard being aware of it.

Arnaudet was his best bet at the moment; he would make Arnaudet put him in touch with the woman. He could, he knew, find Andrée Santrieul tonight at the Café Persan, but he didn't want to wait until night. Time was too short.

But back in the little office behind the

shop, Arnaudet looked into his anxious face and shook his head a little. "Never before have we been able to find out so little. There is no copy of the order for his arrest. Usually an official reason is put down, whether it is true or not. But there isn't even a record as far as we can discover. Half an hour ago, I had a report. They think he's still being questioned."

"Questioned? Then that means—"

"It might mean anything. Sometimes they question people quite politely, you know. Waiting to catch them out in a lie; twisting their words, getting them confused, wearing down their nerves. Depending on pure physical fatigue to break them. It works, too," he added heavily. "It's very hard when you're traveling on forged papers and have to invent a family and friends, remember everything you've said and say it correctly the next time you're asked. And when you're dog tired, it's harder still."

"And the major was bushed last night before they came," said Knight rather hopelessly. "That was nine hours ago. I want to be put in touch with Andrée Santrieul."

"She didn't furnish that description." Arnaudet answered his thought rather than his words. He went on, "And the fact that she hasn't been arrested makes me hopeful that they haven't discovered that the Pierre Desgranges they've got is the Major Brandon they're looking for. He planned to go to see her last night, pretending he was a casual acquaintance of her Paris days. If they'd discovered his identity, they'd have arrested her by now."



THE bell on the shop door halted the question Knight was going to ask. Arnaudet went out and through the half open door, Knight saw a rather pinched-looking child hand him a note. He read it and grunted, then dismissed the child and returned to the office. "Lucien Amiard was released at half past ten and all the others who were taken last night were set free two hours later." Arnaudet set fire to the paper and watched it burn in an ashtray, then stirred the ashes. "They'll all be useless in this zone now," he went on.

"Once the Gestapo has picked up anyone who's suspected of being with us, they never let go of them; they're watched and brought in at frequent intervals for questioning."

"That means an entirely new communications group," said Knight. "I wonder why Télémaque Bordages wasn't arrested. Everything seems to point to the traitor being someone in that group."

Arnaudet was silent for a while. "It isn't only the communications. Raids on the dispersal centers for our newspaper have been too frequent to be coincidence," he said at last.

"Télémaque Bordages met the major last night," persisted Knight. "He could have given them the description. They might have done a fast printing job on the reward notices."

"Télémaque has known me for a year and the Gestapo would like to get their hands on me as much as on your major. More, in fact."

"There's Andrée Santrieul." Knight came back doggedly to his favorite suspicion.

"She also knows me," replied Arnaudet. "A touching faith seems to be put in her loyalty," said the young American sarcastically.

"We've had proof of it," Arnaudet smiled a little.

"I don't like women in these things. You never know where you are with them." It seemed useless to pursue the subject of Andrée and he wasn't sure how much Brandon would like him to press it anyway. He determined to find out something about her on his own. If the damned female had got them all hypnotized, perhaps he could break the spell.

"We are playing into their hands if we distrust each other without reason," said Arnaudet. "Their purpose is to confuse us and they succeed. They are almost more keen on making us feel that we have been betrayed—by each other, by the British, by our leaders—and making us suspect each other than they are on finding out what our plans are. They feel that is the way to break the spirit of the people."

Knight was silent. He knew that men who grow to distrust their comrades and their leaders become demoralized. Smith-

shand had stressed that before they had left London. The colonel had said, "Brandon understands how to handle these people, Knight. Keeping their faith in us and in their own leaders too, of course, is more important than blowing up a bridge, especially in view of the projected operations. It's Brandon's business to bolster up that faith. It's been shaken."

Arnaudet let him out through the back. After some difficulty, he found a telephone booth; it was wiser not to use Arnaudet's phone unless it were absolutely necessary. He called the Grand Hotel and asked for messages, but there were none. If by any miracle, Brandon had been set free, he would have left word for "Monsieur Noyer" in room twenty-four. With an increasing sense of hopelessness, he started back towards Télémaque's house, and again passed Gestapo headquarters. A little knot of people was standing there, as always, heedless of a steady rain. Knight's eyes flicked to the bulletin board. There was nothing new.



A CAR was sliding to a halt in front of the entrance to the next building which had once been the town hall but was now Staff Headquarters. The guards came to attention and hurriedly shoved aside a bewildered little group of elderly men; they were a delegation of shopkeepers who had called on the commandant to obtain clarification of some new regulations. With other passers-by, Knight stopped to see who the important person in the car might be. The military chauffeur was opening the door. A woman got out, stepped over a puddle and walked swiftly to the flight of steps leading up to the door over which hung a wet and bedraggled flag.

A voice called out, "Look at her! Andrée Santrieul, the slut!"

Not a flicker of expression showed in Andrée's face; she might not have heard. Eyes fixed straight ahead, she walked on. Then, from behind Knight, someone threw a stone. It missed the slender, erect figure but the margin was narrow. Two of the guards closed in on either side of her. A whistle blew. Other guards started after a youth who was running swiftly down the street. Flanked by the stocky guards, Andrée disappeared inside.

Knight walked on. He had no wish to become involved in the affair or to be held and questioned as to the identity and description of the youth. So that was Andrée Santrieul. When he got over his feeling of surprise, he admitted to himself that she was beautiful and there had been a certain classic magnificence about the way she had walked on and up the steps. She had not increased her pace nor once turned her head in the direction from which the missile had come. It would not be easy to tell what Mademoiselle Santrieul was thinking or feeling or, he reflected grimly, where her loyalties lay.

Télémaque Bordage's aunt opened the door and admitted Knight without enthusiasm, merely jerking her head and saying, "In there."

In the room she indicated he found, as well as Télémaque, Achille Dupré and his wife. Michelette's heart-shaped little face looked desperately tired, but she seemed otherwise undamaged by her night at Gestapo headquarters. "We were put in cells for the night," she explained, "and only asked a few questions this morning, then set free. They said they had found out what they wanted to know."

"What was it?"

She shook her head. "They didn't say."

"What did they ask you?"

"What you looked like, monsieur." She giggled a little. "I told them you were fat like a tub of butter and had a little black mustache."

"Did they ask you any questions about Brandon?"

"Only if I had seen him. I said no and they seemed to believe me."

"Who knew I—or rather, the major—was expected? You did, Bordages and the Josserand family. Who else?" Knight put the question bluntly.

"The chief and Tissier, of course," volunteered Télémaque. "That is all."

"Someone talked," said Knight flatly.

"You might have been followed," suggested Michelette.

"I wasn't." The American was definite.

"Did you include me?" asked Achille with his curiously mocking smile.

"Yes, you knew, too. I hadn't forgotten you," Knight assured him. "Why was Lucien Amiard released before any of the rest of you?" he went on.

"That is something a good many people will want to know," replied Télémaque in a hard voice.



THE aunt appeared in the doorway. "I suppose your friends are hungry, as usual, Télémaque. Supper's on the table. There isn't a great deal, but there's enough to go round."

As they ate, they turned on the radio to hear the latest official pronouncements. After the usual quota of propaganda, there was local news. "Henceforth the snaring of rabbits for personal consumption will be illegal. Anyone owning, selling or buying a rabbit without a license is subject to penalty. Any rabbits snared must be reported on form B4-122 with other meat products."

"And Thérèse had promised to bring me two next Saturday," groaned the aunt.

But the radio was going on. "... have not availed themselves of the opportunity to earn the generous reward offered for the apprehension of the English spy, Michael Brandon, who is known to be in this district, sterner measures must be taken. If he has not been surrendered to the authorities by midnight of Wednesday, ten hostages will be shot by order of the commandant."

For an instant Knight's face had lighted up. It meant that the identity of "Pierre Desgranges" had not been discovered. As the announcement had continued, his eyes had clouded. "Christ," he muttered and knew that everyone at the table was looking at him. He pushed the plate away as if his appetite had vanished.

"Your major will give himself up?" asked Michelette.

Oddly enough, it was Achille who came to his rescue, with a gentle amusement in his voice. "Now, Michelette, how can he tell?"

"Major Brandon is said to be a brave man," replied the girl. "A brave man does not let others die for him."

"It depends on the circumstances," remarked Achille.

"There can be no circumstances which would justify a man skulking in safety while others died for him," she repeated woodenly.

"It isn't as simple as that, madame."

CHAPTER VIII

BRANDON GETS A GESTAPO JOB

Knight heard his own voice saying harshly.

"You forget, Michelette, they are French lives and he is an Englishman," rasped the aunt.

Knight got up. "There can be no question as to what the major would like to do," he said stiffly. "But what he does will be dictated solely by what he believes will be of most service to his country and yours." It was a rather ridiculous speech; he realized that as soon as he'd made it. Achille was applauding softly.

"Bravo!" He glanced at the others. "The major can do no wrong." He looked back to Knight. "I believe you'd say the same if you were one of the hostages to be shot."

"Perhaps he might," interposed the aunt, "but would the major's decision be the same if there were one of his own people concerned? His subordinate? Someone he knows and possibly was quite fond of?"

"It would have no influence on his decision, madame. Of that I am certain," said Knight.

Achille raised his eyebrows. "The danger of one person who is close to you is a more potent argument than the fate of a thousand strangers."

"I wouldn't like to make the decision," said Télémaque, "though it is a rule that there must be no surrender to save hostages. And it will be difficult to make people understand if an Englishman allows Frenchmen to be shot."

As he walked back across the town, shoulders hunched against the driving rain, Knight fought to throw off a growing feeling of horror. He felt suffocated and stifled, enmeshed in a web that reached out in all directions, a network of distrust wherein friend was turned against friend, ally against ally, brother against brother.

He passed a small café with a telephone booth and hesitated for a moment. Should he call the hotel again in the hope that there might be a message? He decided to go back there himself. It was nine o'clock and he intended going to the Café Persan a little later. Inquiry had told him that Andrée sang first at eight, then at ten, again at twelve and sometimes again at two.



THE big clock on the wall of a corridor in Gestapo headquarters said seven. For a while Brandon wondered if it had stopped. It seemed to have said seven for so long. Then he realized that the ticking came from it; he had thought that the tick-tock was part of the ringing in his ears. Two guards stood, one on either side of him. One held a sheaf of typewritten papers which contained a transcript of each interview to which he had been subjected during the past fifteen hours. Now he was being sent to yet another office, one in which he had not been before. The door gave no clue to the name or status of the occupant; it simply bore a sign saying *Private*. But it was guarded by two men instead of the usual one and four others sat on a bench just outside. He concluded that the owner was a person of some importance.

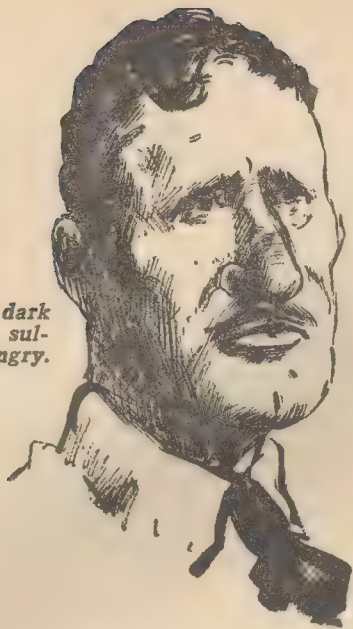
The hand of the clock jerked on to one minute past seven. Its ticking blurred sometimes and mingled with the sound of voices from the other end of the corridor. Somewhere a door opened and a draft of cold air blew in. Brandon was thankful, for it momentarily drove away the deadly exhaustion which was drugging his senses.

Colonel Ehrwahlt strode down the corridor, followed by his aide, who was trotting to keep up with the colonel's strides. The commandant's face was white with anger, his eyes blazing, his mouth a slit of rage. He didn't spare a look for the prisoner or guards but strode to the door marked *Private*, flung it open and went in.

Less than a minute later, an elderly, bespectacled clerk with sheaves of papers in his hands came out, looking terrified, and in his haste spilled most of the papers on the floor. He grabbed them up feverishly and scuttled off down the passage, his one apparent aim being to put as much distance between himself and the colonel and to do it as quickly as he could.

A *Schutzstaffel* officer hurried in. He was wet and streams of water trickled from his black mackintosh. "Is Captain Brundt inside?" he demanded.

Brundt's dark face was sullen and angry.



"Yes, sir." The guard came stiffly to attention. "Colonel Ehrwahlt is with him."

"This can't wait. It's urgent." He knocked and then disappeared, only to re-appear fifteen seconds later, looking perplexed, upset and a little frightened. He walked up and down restlessly for a few moments, scowling at the door, then sat down on the bench beside the four extra guards.

So it was to Captain Brundt that he was being taken, thought Brandon. At last he'd got to the top. What had brought the colonel here in such an obvious state of rage? The interview was a stormy one, to judge by the reception the urgent young officer had received. As Brandon was thinking that, a voice like an infuriated bull's reverberated through the solid door.

"... and furnish me with a complete list of all the spies you've got in this so-called underground organization. I'm in charge of this district and, by God, I'm going to know what's being done in it!"

There was a silence while presumably the captain replied in a more moderate tone.

"You'll bring me proof before you take any further action against her!" The bull's roar was near the door now.

The colonel came out. He still looked

apoplectic as once again without glancing to left or right, he strode up the corridor. His little aide paused long enough to close the door and had to run to catch up. The *Schutzstaffel* officer got up and began to pace up and down again. Finally the buzzer went and he was summoned. Minutes passed and he came out looking less happy than before. Again the buzzer went. A sharp order brought Brandon's guards alert. He was told to go in. The clock said seven forty-five.

The room was comfortably furnished, with the usual picture of Hitler behind the desk flanked by signed portraits of Himmler and Goebbels. In the corner of a couch, sat a small dapper man who was smoking through an extremely long cigarette holder. In the seat behind the desk was Captain Brundt. He had very dark hair, heavy eyebrows, black eyes and an olive skin. His nose was of a shape that had caused unkind people to search his family tree with zealous application in the hope of discovering some Semitic ancestors. Their efforts had been unsuccessful, due largely perhaps to the destruction by fire some few years previously of all the records in the town from which he came.



HE DID not invite his prisoner to sit down, but merely turned to the dapper little man and said, "Monsieur Desgranges speaks German, Captain Ritter."

"You handle the matter, Captain Brundt. I want to observe for a few days, then perhaps I'll have some suggestions." The tone and words were courteous, but there seemed to be an underlying threat and the yellowish eyes under finely marked eyebrows were watchful and cold.

Brundt's dark face was sullen and angry. Ritter must be the man sent from Norway. Brundt's resentment would be due to the fact that a man several years younger and of no higher rank than himself should have been sent to inquire into the efficiency with which he was running the district.

"Monsieur Desgranges, do you know why you have been brought here?"

"No."

"You have not asked, I notice." He glanced at the typewritten papers which the guard had placed on his desk.

"No, sir," Brandon replied impassively.

"Why not?" The question was shot out.

"I never question authority."

"Very proper." There was a slight sneer in the words. "You realize that we could detain you."

"Yes."

"We might decide that you knew something about the sabotage that has been taking place recently and have you questioned. You know that."

"Yes."

"You have been well treated, haven't you?"

"Yes."

"We don't always treat our prisoners so gently. If we have reason to suppose that they are withholding information, sometimes the enthusiasm of our younger men gets out of bounds, and the prisoner dies. Now I'm sure you are a sensible man. You wouldn't like that to happen to you, would you?"

"No," agreed Brandon.

Brundt lighted a cigarette. "Your friend, Fräulein Santrieul is very upset about your arrest," he said casually.

"That's very kind of her," replied Brandon when he saw that a reply was expected.

"It seems that she called your hotel on the telephone today and someone there told her. You were in her dressing room for a long time last night. What did you talk about?"

"People we both knew in Paris. The times we spent together there."

"You did not discuss the political situation, by any chance?"

"With a woman, *Herr Hauptmann*? No."

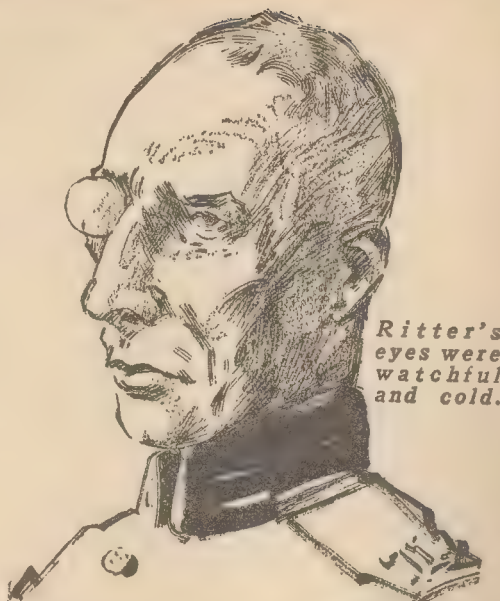
"Or the war?"

"The air raid was quite enough reminder without discussing it."

"The lights were out for a considerable time owing to the failure of the power lines," pursued Brundt. "Do you expect me to believe that a man alone in the dark with a half-clad woman who is beautiful and desirable—" He broke off. "Don't you agree with me that Fräulein Santrieul is beautiful?"

"Very beautiful, sir."

"As I was saying, do you expect me to believe that a man alone with a beautiful woman in those conditions talks about



Ritter's eyes were watchful and cold.

people they knew in Paris? Monsieur Desgranges, you must take me for a fool."

"Unfortunately, Mademoiselle Santrieul seems to have other interests at present."

Brundt laughed. "Oh, you tried, did you? But you didn't insist. Well, well. We'll let it go at that. I sent for you, Monsieur Desgranges, because I thought you might be of service to us. Your papers seem to be in order and your political views unobjectionable—for a Frenchman. I am going to give you an opportunity to serve the third Reich." Brandon didn't know what to say to this proposed honor, so he just looked polite and attentive. "We have reason to suppose that Andrée Santrieul is involved with the criminals who are responsible for the sabotage and murder that is rife in this district. But we have no proof. She is, as you know, Colonel Ehrwahlt's mistress. Her beauty seems to have blinded him to her dangerousness. It is my duty to protect him from the danger in spite of himself. But I must have proof to lay before him. And there I think you can be useful to us."

"But Mademoiselle Santrieul is the last person I can imagine having anything to do with any political organization," protested Brandon.

"It's a great mistake, just because a woman is pretty, to think she is harmless. I could tell you stories of women we have

found committing the most monstrous acts against the Reich, and some of them were as pretty and much younger than Andrée Santrieu. However, that is beside the point. You can make love to her and represent yourself as an ardent de Gaulist. You will say that you want to help them, that you've heard of the underground organization, but you don't know how to contact them. If you do it cleverly, she will offer to put you in touch with them."



BRANDON was silent. He was driving his tired brain frantically. Better that he should be detailed to spy on her than someone else. But if he accepted too readily, it might make Brundt suspicious. He said, "I'm a mathematics teacher. Spying is a bit out of my line."

"You will not be offered a second opportunity to serve the Reich." The threat was implicit in the words. "Your unwillingness looks suspiciously as if you sympathized with these criminals."

"I don't sympathize with them. I think they're a pack of fools," said Brandon hurriedly. "But to inform—"

"I think you can imagine what the alternative will be." The sullen black eyes were boring into him. He didn't look up, but made a resigned little gesture of helplessness. "I was sure you'd be sensible," purred Captain Brundt.

"Suppose she is mixed up with them—not that I think she is for a moment, but suppose she is—what will happen to her?"

"Let me give you some advice, my friend. In your present position, you had better worry over what might happen to you. Now. You will go to the Café Persan tonight and see her. You will report to me here tomorrow at eight P.M. You may use the rear entrance, so that you will not be observed. And, Monsieur Desgranges, for your own sake, you had better find the proof I need. Don't think you can go out of here and forget all about it. Your family in Lille will be watched and at the slightest sign that you are trying to doublecross me, they will be arrested. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly."

"You may go."

He rang the signal under the desk and

one of the guards promptly appeared. "Show Monsieur Desgranges the back way out. Here." He tossed over a card on which he had scribbled something. It fell at Brandon's feet. "That will get you in to see me at any time you have news." As the Britisher stooped to pick it up, Brundt nodded at the dapper little man in the corner of the couch who had not said a word during the entire interview.

The guard grunted, "Come on—you" and led Brandon out into the corridor, down several other passages and through what had evidently been the stacks of the library, until they reached another guard room. The radio was blaring as they waited at a locked gate for a man on duty to unfasten it. ". . . spy, Michael Brandon, who is known to be in this district, sterner measures must be taken. If he has not been surrendered to the authorities by midnight of Wednesday, ten hostages will be shot by order of the commandant."

It stunned Brandon. For a moment everything swam as a wave of nausea swept over him. He had known they might do that, of course. They had done it before. But he had put off thinking of it, put off facing it. Today was Tuesday. Wednesday, by midnight. . . .

"Come on, or d'you want to stand there all night?" The words accompanied by a rough push, reminded him that the gate had been opened and the guard was waiting for him to go through. A moment later he found himself out in the darkness of a little backstreet, the rain beating down on his face. He leaned against the wall for a moment, conscious only of dull horror and exhaustion.

The tramp of sentries drove him to make the effort necessary to put one foot in front of the other. He mustn't hang around here. He must get Andrée out, before midnight tomorrow, and then it wouldn't matter so much. He pulled himself up abruptly, both actually and metaphorically. He was starting to cross a road without knowing in which direction he was going. There were other things to be done before he could think of saving one life, no matter how precious. He concentrated on the immediate present. He must get back to the hotel, make him-

self presentable, get in touch with Knight and Arnaudet, and get some rest. The last was essential. He was drugged and poisoned with fatigue; his brain was incapable of clear thinking, which wasn't surprising. It was more than forty-eight hours since he had slept, and fifteen of them had been spent in Gestapo headquarters.



THE clerk in the hotel dropped his mouth open and gaped in surprise. He evidently was not used to guests returning who had been taken by the Gestapo. "I didn't expect—that is, we didn't know—" he stammered. "Er, the rule is that all bills are payable in advance."

Brandon planked some money down on the desk; his cash and personal effects had been returned to him intact. He became aware of the scrutiny of four uniformed police officers, stationed in the lobby; but their vigil was not concerned with him, for after a comprehensive inspection of his face and clothes, they lost interest. One of them said something to the clerk, who replied, "I'll let you know when he comes."

When the officer had gone out of earshot, Brandon said, "Whom are they waiting for?"

"That's something I can't tell you, sir. I'll give you a receipt. Here's your change."

"I don't want any change. Whom are they waiting for?"

There was quite a lot of change; fear and greed alternated with ludicrous speed in the watery eyes of the clerk. "The gentleman in the room next yours, sir," he mumbled as he made out the receipt. "Name of Noyer. They gave me a most accurate description of him, then asked if there was anyone here who looked like that. They say his name is really Georges Boutry."

Brandon was past the point where his brain was capable of either surprise or alarm. He took the receipt and started up the stairs. The one flight seemed an almost insurmountable obstacle and only a determined effort of will drove him up. He reached his room and, closing the door, leaned against it.

There was no mistaking the fact that

the room had been searched; no attempt had been made to disguise it. Everything was scattered over the floor; the mattress had been slit open, the lining ripped from the suitcase, the drawers turned out. He salvaged a collar and his razor. His hands fumbled and he stopped in the middle of familiar motions, wondering how to go on. He managed a passable shave with the cold water. Knight must be warned, somehow, he told himself. But how? He turned off the light and opened the window. His hands felt along the wet wall to the drain from the rain gutter. It was loose, either from the concussion of high explosives or old age, and it had served excellently as a hiding place for a package wrapped in water-repellent silk. A sense of reality pierced through the fog of exhaustion as his hand closed over an automatic, which he stowed under his left armpit.

Across the street from the hotel was a public telephone and from it he made two discreet calls, while all the time his aching, bloodshot eyes peered through the gloom to watch the people who might turn into the Grand Hotel. From the replies that he received, it looked as if Knight were on his way back—unless, of course, he'd got wind that they were looking for him. Arnaudet was sending a man, but the man had to be found, given Knight's description and despatched. It might take an hour or more to do all this and in the meantime, Knight would walk straight into the trap.

It was already dark, and the combination of the rain and the blackout made it imperative to be fairly close. Brandon dare not stay at this far side of the road. There was a car parked in front of the door. It wasn't one of the usual sleek, shining vehicles of the secret police, but the driver, who remained at the wheel, was uninformed. Brandon crossed the road some distance behind it and approached to within six feet of the hotel door, keeping close to the sandbags along the front of the building. If he stood flat against them, probably he would not be noticed unless lights were turned on the sidewalk. He noticed now what he had not been able to see from the other side of the road. There was another man in the back of the car. Time passed and with each minute

he was more conscious of his crushing weariness.

There was something familiar in the walk of a man who was crossing the road diagonally towards the hotel. A gleam of light from the subdued headlights of the police car shone for an instant on him. Damn it, why did Knight have to come from that direction? It made it necessary to intercept him straight in front of the car. Brandon went forward quickly so that he almost collided with his subordinate. He said, "Turn round and keep walking" in a low, curt voice and heard the mingled surprise and relief in Knight's "Right, sir," as he obeyed and fell into step.

"Gestapo waiting for you. Hotel's thick with them."

"Halt!" Whistles blew. Something about a man crossing the road to the door of a hotel, meeting another and instantly veering away from the door had struck the man in the back of the car as suspicious. A shot whistled up the wind.



THEY broke into a run as they turned round the sandbagged corner of the building. They were in the old market place now. Behind them they could hear the grinding of gears as the car started up. Brandon stumbled, righted himself and felt Knight's hand under his arm. "There was a bomb crater near here this morning," he muttered.

"On the right, a few feet farther."

They plunged into it, landing in two feet of muddy water, and lay flat against the side. Shouting men clattered down the sidewalk. "... saw them turn the corner." "Nowhere they can have gone here." "... must have gone up the road." "Can't see anything in this damned rain." Then the car came by, a searchlight on the running board sweeping to right and left. It reached the corner, turned and came back. A little beyond them it stopped and a voice called to the men on foot, "Get your men back to their posts. May not have been he. I'm calling for a cordon around this district."

Knight groaned. "We'd better get out of here before he gets his cordon into operation," he said.

It was an effort of heroic proportions for Brandon to climb out of the crater,

even with Knight's help. He stood on the road, swaying a little. "Cibault's."

Knight didn't argue. It was the nearest place. He put a steadying hand under Brandon's arm and knew the full measure of the older man's exhaustion when he didn't protest. In silence they traversed the deserted streets to the little tobacco shop.

The old man saw their soaked and muddy clothes, grumbled that he supposed they'd want dry ones, and led them to the trap door. As he opened the panel in the coal cellar, he said, "Did you hear the wireless? About the hostages that will be shot if—"

"He's all in, Papa Cibault," Knight interrupted him ruthlessly.

"I thought he should know."

Brandon had stumbled across the little inner room and fallen onto the pile of rugs at the far side. "Wake me in an hour," he said.

"But, good God, sir—" Knight protested as the light from the lamp Cibault was placing on the table showed him the terrible lines of exhaustion on the major's face.

"That's an order." For an instant the gray eyes looked into his.

"Yes, sir." Knight began to divest himself of his wet clothes.

At the end of an hour he shook his superior awake, regarding him with some misgiving as he sat up and rubbed his hot eyes. Brandon still had a splitting headache and his body still ached, but he would be able to hold exhaustion at bay for a little longer. He knew his own limits with great accuracy; he had to. He listened to Knight's report and then, laconically and without expression, told him what had happened.

"You must keep out of their way," he ended. "While I continue to be Brundt's newest spy, they'll leave me alone."

"What will happen when you don't have anything to tell Brundt?"

A faint smile crossed the tired face. "Suppose Andrée were to go to her colonel and say that she is disappointed in her old friend Pierre Desgranges, that the idiot seems to be developing very anti-German views, and that she thinks he ought to be investigated?"

"It would clear suspicion from her—and

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BY
HAMILTON GREENE



They plunged into the bomb crater. "We've got to get out before they get a cordon around us," Knight groaned.

put you in the clear, too," agreed Knight.

"If Brundt fell for it. But he's not a complete fool, nor, I think, is Captain Ritter. If Brundt is really out to get her, if he really suspects her, he'll just think she has succeeded in worming out of me that he sent me."

"D'you think he does suspect her?"

"I'm afraid so, Knight. She thinks so. And I overheard the end of a sentence Ehrwahlt was saying to him that give me the idea he has tried to persuade the colonel to let him use other measures."

He stopped abruptly; something that his tired brain had forgotten was coming back now. Ehrwahlt's voice saying, "Furnish me with a complete list of the spies you've got in this so-called underground organization."

Knight, dimly perceiving the aching anxiety under the other man's matter-of-fact tone, said, "Couldn't she disappear? And be shipped out of the country? Lots of people have been gotten out."

"When the job is finished," Brandon answered curtly. He rubbed his hand over

his eyes and got to his feet. "I must get something to eat, then I'm going up to see her. I want you at some place where I can find you."

CHAPTER IX

THE MAJOR MAKES A FRIEND



THE Café Persan was as stuffy and crowded as it had been on the previous night. Its proprietor was beaming greasily over the satisfactorily sardine-like packing of his customers. Then his eyes lit on the bored stranger who had turned out to be a friend of Andrée Santrieu's, and a little disquiet came into them. He'd like to know what his purpose was in coming. Monsieur Monou never believed anyone's purpose was what it appeared to be on the surface. He went forward with his professional greeting smile firmly plastered across his round face.

"Ah, monsieur, you are here again."

This remark did not seem to require a reply, so Brandon, always economic of effort, merely nodded to him and sat down at a table. The one-eyed waiter, with pleasant recollections of his tip the night before, hovered. "Monsieur will take cognac?" Brandon nodded again and he hurried off to get it.

A man was putting a performing poodle through its paces.

"It is hard to get acts," Monou explained apologetically. "Travel is so difficult for them, and permits so hard to obtain. One must take what one can get."

"I haven't complained, have I?"

"No, monsieur. But you are a man of taste and this act—well, it is second rate." He shrugged deprecatingly. "Monsieur, being a professor, would not be interested in it. It is," he went on with a nervous laugh, "that there is nowhere else in town to go at night, I expect. Or perhaps it is just Mademoiselle Santrieu," he added with a knowing look.

"Why not ask your Gestapo friends?"

"Monsieur!" It was an adequate if not entirely convincing performance of a deeply hurt, honest man. "One must be civil to them in my position, but friends—no!"

"I'll remember the distinction."

The poodle, having finished its act, was running round wagging its tail frantically. Monsieur Monou decided that conversationally he was making no headway with the stranger, so when the brandy came, he bowed and retired. A girl with very fair hair and a face which would have been round if she'd been properly fed, came over to the table. She carried a wooden tray with a few packages of the foul-tasting *ersatz* cigarettes that only Monou's favored clientele could afford.

"You are all alone?" she said and, without waiting for an invitation, sat down.

"Not any more, apparently."

"It is not good to be alone in a place like this."

The orchestra produced the most astounding volume of sound in proportion to its instruments that Brandon had ever heard. He could hardly believe that a violin, a saxophone, a piano and a drum could accomplish such a racket. It vibrated through his aching head and he frowned. The girl was quick to notice it.

"It's given me a splitting headache, too," she sympathized companionably.

"Have a drink?" he offered idly. After a quick glance around for Monou, who seemed to have left the room, she sat down beside him and poured the liquid down her throat as if it were water. She wasn't more than seventeen.

Andrée had started to sing her first number. The girl followed Brandon's eyes and said, "If I had her body and face, I would be in Paris. It drives men crazy. It is the face of an angel who has seen hell." Brandon did not reply.

"Do you know the Gestapo men here?" he asked suddenly. "I mean, the ones out of uniform."

"But, of course. Over there, under the gilt-painted vase. The man with the glasses." The spotlight following Andrée had shown momentarily on a dried-up little man. "He is one. There is also one two tables behind you, wearing a green tie."

"You know them?"

Her face expressed her loathing, but she only shrugged. "One has to, if one wants to work."

"What's your name?"

"Clementine."

Brandon had beckoned to the waiter.

Andrée was starting her last number. He paid the man and got up.

"Where are you going?" She looked a bit disappointed.

"I'm going to wait for Mademoiselle Santrieul outside her dressing room."

"But you can't see from there."

"I know."

"Don't you want to watch?"

He said "no" so savagely that she looked frightened. He must be careful. "Here, Clementine, for the pleasure of your company." He took her hand and closed it over a couple of bills.

"All that, monsieur?" She looked down and her little face was childish as it lighted up with pleasure.

The number was over at last and Andrée came along the passage, Monsieur Monou beside her talking volubly.

"Oh, all right, I'll wear it," she cut him short as she reached the door. Over her shoulder she threw a greeting to some officers who were surging round from the front, then scooped Brandon by the arm into the room. "I have to sing again to-night. We haven't long," she told him hurriedly. "I've been so frightened all day." Her eyes were searching his haggard face, looking at the gray triangles of fatigue under his high cheekbones. "They didn't hurt you?"

"The kid gloves were on all the time. The only thing they didn't do was offer me a chair." He sat down and grinned at her. "You've no idea how I dislike standing." He told her of his interview with Brundt.

"If you don't give him what he wants, he'll arrest you again and this time there won't be any kid gloves," she said slowly.



BRANDON repeated in somewhat more detail what he had said to Knight. "If you tell the colonel, it helps you make character as a loyal adherent of the Reich and it provides me with a reason for not showing up with proof."

"It won't fool Brundt," she stated definitely.

"No, but it may hold him up for a day or two. But then I'll either have succeeded or failed, Andrée. I must stay at large another four days. Saturday's the

farthest limit for instructing the men."

"I thought you said the operation was planned for Monday."

"It'll take at least two days to get those instructions into the hands of the unit leaders and they need another two days to instruct their men. That's running it pretty damn close as it is." He broke off wearily. "They've got Knight spotted now, which doesn't help."

Then he told her of the remarks he had overheard Colonel Ehrwahlt making, or rather yelling, to Brundt. "Will Brundt give him a list?"

"Oh, yes. Brundt never flouts him openly. He goes behind his back quite often, like setting you to spy on me."

"Will the list be correct?"

"Yes. Because Ehrwahlt is equal to checking on it. He doesn't trust Brundt an inch. They hate each other. Ehrwahlt is old-school military. Having these party police here with an authority which is equal to his own, and in some ways greater, irks him continually. Now that he's overworked and badly worried about the sabotage and general unrest, he's worse tempered than ever, and Brundt doesn't want to provoke a showdown. Ehrwahlt is valuable to the high command and they wouldn't like Brundt to get him too mad. Brundt may be afraid, too, that they'd back Ehrwahlt against him."

"Can you get the list from him?"

She shook her head. "No. That is, I couldn't get him to give it to me or let me look at it. I might be able to steal it."

"Then he'd know. You're sure he couldn't be talked into letting you see it?"

"It comes under the heading of confidential documents, and that comes under duty. I'm no Mata Hari anyway, but I doubt whether any woman could get him to deviate the proverbial hair's breadth from his devotion to duty. He's fond of me, but he'd order me shot tomorrow if he suspected me of espionage or if he thought it would do the slightest good to the fatherland."

"Where's his office?" asked Brandon.

"Right in the middle of the headquarters building," she told him and went on, "Besides, if Brundt gives it to him this evening, it probably wouldn't be there. He takes papers back with him to his



*"I've got the money to pay for it!"
She thrust her chin out stubbornly.*

quarters." She caught his look of surprise. "Until you've seen the German army, you don't know what bureaucracy is! The war is being fought with millions of tons of paper and print, instructions, regulations, advices, reports, applications. It's another of the things that doesn't improve Ehrwahlt's temper."

"How about getting into his quarters?"

"If he comes to me straight from his office—and he's usually there until very late—it'll be in his briefcase, most likely." She stared at a lipstick with absent-minded concentration. "He leaves it on the settee in the living room. I have a key. Some time ago, I took a wax impression of his key and Arnaudet had one made."

"Any way of my getting in?"

"With guards on the door? Ever since this"—she made a slight gesture to her scarred back—"I've been furnished with bodyguards. The only place they don't go with me is into church."

"Do messages come for the colonel sometimes?"

"They call him on the phone. Occasionally if a soldier comes."

"If I got a uniform, that would get me by the guards. Where do they stand?"

"On the landing outside the door. Mostly they sit at the head of the stairs. There's a bench there. But if you rang the bell, I'd have to explain you."

"Couldn't you leave the door open?"

"Yes, but the guard would suspect, then. Soldiers don't simply walk in."

"I could pretend I'd rung the bell. You leave the door unlatched. I could push it open and, if the passage is as badly lit as most of these places, just say 'Message for the colonel' and go on in as if you or a maid had come."

"It's leaving a lot to chance."

"How long after he arrives should I try it?"

"Three quarters of an hour. He usually drinks some wine. Possibly he'll come here and take me back, but even if he doesn't, you will see his car drive up. You know the little park that used to be called the Jardin Maréchal Foch? You can watch from there."

"And the key?"

She thought for a moment. "On the mantelpiece there's a blue and white bowl. I'll put it in that."

"Andrée!" A voice came from outside the door. "Are you ready? It's time for you to go on."

"I'm coming." She turned to him and for a moment caught him with a grip that was primitive in its strength. "Take care of yourself," she whispered, the age-old plea of women to their men, brushed his lips swiftly with a kiss and was gone.



OUTSIDE, Brandon found Clementine having a heated argument with Monsieur Monou about a steak of a size which couldn't be obtained with a month's coupons from a food book.

"... and I don't get that meat in for you and your kind!" the proprietor was saying.

"I've got the money to pay for it." The girl's eyes were glittering as they rested on the steak and she thrust her little chin out stubbornly.

"It's for the customers," persisted Monou.

"I'm a customer," Brandon interrupted quite gently. "I'm buying the steak for mademoiselle."

"Ah, monsieur! Why did the silly little goose not tell me?"

"Come along, Clementine, and let's go somewhere quieter."

"I'll get my coat. I'll be quick," she said eagerly. "And you"—she made a face

at Monou—"tell Jacques to wrap my steak!"

"She has spirit, that one!" Monou looked after her. "Monsieur will have a delightful evening. Mademoiselle Santrieul was not—obliging?" he asked with a knowing leer.

"One wonders how some people escape being murdered," murmured Brandon still more gently.

"Monsieur!" Monou looked into the face above him.

"Get the steak wrapped."

Monou was reminded again of the devil. If ever murder looked out of a human's eyes, it was looking out of the bloodshot gray ones that were fixed on him. He sensed the thin thread of control that held in leash a ferocity he had never before encountered.

"The steak! Of course, the steak! At once, monsieur." He clapped his hands. "Jacques! Where is the dolt? Jacques, *imbécile!* Wrap this at once."

Clementine prattled gaily as she trotted out beside Brandon, her precious steak firmly clutched in her arm. The man, who was trying to work out a plan the germ of which had come to him when he remembered the girl, was silent. With an abrupt "*Tais-toi!*" he yanked her into the lee of a wall.

"You are not cross with me, monsieur?" she asked in a tiny voice.

"I want to know whether we are followed or not."

"Oh." There was a long silence. She was clinging to his arm, huddled back out of the rain as far as she could get. "You're a de Gaullist," she said at last.

"Would you be frightened?"

"No. I would like to help you, if I could, monsieur."

"You can. Do you live near here?"

"Yes, monsieur. Right in the next block. Alone."

"Good. Give me your address and then go to your room and wait for me. I have something I must do. Possibly I'll bring a friend with me when I return. . . Is there any way you can let me know if you are alone?"

"I won't let anyone in. You were thinking of police? If everything is all right, I will leave my door open a little. If anyone comes, I'll close it."

"Go along then. We don't seem to have been followed."

"How long will you be?"

"About an hour. Not longer, I hope."

"Take care of yourself." She repeated the words that Andrée had said less than a half hour before and the man winced in the darkness.

He crossed the road quickly to a row of little shops, more than half of which were empty, their owners having fled before the German invasion. He walked as far as the third shop and gave a low whistle.



KNIGHT stepped out of a doorway and joined him. "I thought you were never coming," he said. "I was getting worried."

"When I started in Intelligence, someone told me it was fifty per cent waiting. They should have said ninety-five." He outlined his plan. "You'll have a more comfortable place to wait," he ended, "and company."

"That'll be jolly," murmured Knight.

"We've got to get me a uniform."

"Will Cibault have one?"

"I doubt it, and it would take too long to get to his place and back."

"But where the devil are you going to find one?"

"Shouldn't be difficult. God knows there are plenty walking about."

"They've got soldiers in them, unfortunately," observed Knight.

"The soldier can be removed."

"You mean, knock one on the head? But that—"

"You have the most amazing way of trying to conduct a totally illegal enterprise in a law-abiding manner," interrupted Brandon. "Burglary, arson and robbery with violence never seem to occur to you."

Knight laughed a little. He knew that when his chief made unnecessary, discursive remarks of that kind, he was usually trying to think something out. "Where will be the best place for getting our victim?" he asked.

"All this part of town is pretty much of a disreputable district, if my hazy memories are correct. Soldiers will be on patrol duty around this time." He started



Knight hit the soldier on the point of the jaw . . . and Brandon slugged him with his gun.

to walk as he spoke and Knight fell in step beside him. "We stand a fair chance of getting one alone. We need not kill him," he went on judicially as though he were discussing the advisability of mixing whiskey and soda, "because that would only mean reprisals. As long as he doesn't see us," he qualified his plan of mercy.

It wasn't difficult to find a small alley between two houses, the mouth of which was in a Stygian darkness that would have cloaked any crime.

"Nice neighborhood," muttered Knight.

A soldier strutted past diagonally across from them and, whistling *Auf Flugeln des Gesanges* badly off key, crossed the road practically into their arms. Knight landed a blow on the point of his jaw that would have felled an ox and Brandon methodically removed his helmet and slugged him on the head with the barrel of his gun. Knight lowered the limp body to the ground.

"Better see his regiment." Brandon lighted a match and shielded it against

the wind and rain so that it shone on the collar. "The society for the prevention of cruelty to children will be after us," he remarked as he hurriedly began to unfasten the man's tunic. "Doesn't look more than sixteen."

In the short distance between there and Clementine's house, no one evinced the slightest interest in them. They climbed the five flights of stairs. A phonograph was blaring in one room they passed and someone was crying in another. On the top floor, the door was open.

"Oh, monsieur, I have prayed for you and you are safe!" Clementine's greeting was so unexpected that the surprise on Knight's face was beyond disguise. "You think it funny that I should pray? Why shouldn't I?"

"It's rather gone out of fashion these days, *petite*," Brandon ruffled the blond hair and went on in. "This is my friend. You might teach him a few prayers."

"Did you kill a soldier to get it?" the girl asked as she looked at the uniform.

"Just patted him on the head," Knight reassured her.

The tunic might have been a worse fit, though it was too tight across the shoulders, but the boots were provoking a startling depth of profanity in the major.

Brandon's opinion of the boots was even lower half an hour later as he stood under the entirely inadequate shelter of an elm tree in the Jardin Maréchal Foch and watched the block of flats opposite. For nearly twenty-five minutes now the colonel's car had stood outside. Deliberately he kept his mind from picturing the scene inside the corner apartment on the first floor. But in spite of its rigid schooling, thoughts crept in that brought a sick anger to his stomach. Another man was kissing the lips that had clung to his. The colonel was not an unattractive man, in a way. He told himself that even the fleeting thought was unworthy. The colonel could make no real difference; he could not touch the *esprit* that was Andrée. That was all his; Brandon knew it, but still he was jealous.

The interminable forty-five minutes was up. The need for action pushed memories and jealousy into the background. Feeling that his tread would be considerably more military if the boots weren't a couple of sizes too small, he crossed the

road. The *conciierge*, an old woman with most of her teeth missing, looked at him without interest as he started up the stairs. The two guards were, as Andrée had said they would be, seated on a tapestry-covered bench on the landing. The nearer of the two cast one anxious glance down as the newcomer rounded the bend of the stairs, then, reassured when he saw it was not an officer, relaxed again.

"Colonel Ehrwahlt inside?" asked Brandon carelessly as he reached the top step.

The nearer one nodded. The other yawned. The first said, "You look as if you'd fallen in the canal."

"This cursed French climate!" He already had his hand over the bell push. The light was bad and his foot eased the door open. He muttered, "Message for Colonel Ehrwahlt," and went swiftly through the door, closing it quietly behind him.



THERE was a light in the living room and the door into the bedroom was closed. Had Andrée had an opportunity to get the key out and put it in the blue and white jar? Already he was at the mantelpiece, his fingers fumbling in the crock, then a small padlock key lay in his hand. On the settee was an overcoat and cap, gloves and the briefcase. He carried the leather case to the table and opened it. Hurriedly he leafed through the papers.

There were letters complaining of non-cooperation with the police, letters with reference to the land which had been commandeered below the camp for drainage purposes, letters about the quartering of the troops in the town. He found orders concerning "the state of emergency to exist from April 1st to October 1st, unless countermanded" and instructions as to the execution of "Plan 24-843D in the event of a) light commando raids, b) commando raids in force of more than 1,000 men, c) commando raids in force of more than 5,000 men, d) commando raids in force unknown, and e) communications cut owing to suspected commando raids along the coast." Without having the basic plan, these instructions were not of great value, except that, with other scraps of information received from other

sources, Intelligence could probably piece together a very fair idea of Plan 24-843D.

There was a request for a report on a lieutenant with particular reference to his party loyalty, zeal and morals, and under it was what he was looking for. It was quite a long list of names; he had expected that. Trained to memorize quickly and accurately, he had photographed on his brain the first half dozen when the sound of a car drawing up below took him to the window. Carefully, so as not to break the blackout, Brandon peered around the edge of the heavy curtain. It was a military car. A torch flashed for a minute and showed an officer getting out. It had been his intention to leave the list in the briefcase, but now he wouldn't have time to copy or memorize the list of names. When the colonel discovered the theft— But it was no use thinking of that. Hurriedly he stuffed the sheet into his pocket along with the instructions concerning Plan 24-843D, locked the briefcase and replaced it in the identical spot on the settee. He glanced at the jar on the mantel, hesitated a minute, then slipped the key into his pocket.

The two soldiers outside looked up as he came out. "I'll bet he enjoyed being disturbed," the one who had spoken before said knowingly.

"He didn't seem to mind tonight," replied Brandon.

In the square little landing formed by the bend of the stairs, the Britisher halted, coming to rigid attention. A lieutenant was coming up.

"Colonel Ehrwahl still upstairs?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Aren't you on duty?"

"Colonel sent me back to his quarters, sir."

The lieutenant climbed on up. Brandon went down and out into the rain. He was sweating.

Clementine and Knight were playing piquet with a very dirty old deck of cards. The girl, who was sitting cross-legged on the bed, gave a squeal of pleasure when she saw Brandon and looked at Knight. "You see, monsieur, it is good to pray! He is safe, your friend."

"But crippled for life, I expect." Brandon sat, wet clothes and all, on the near-

est chair and stuck out his legs. "And don't grin like that," he growled at Knight who was hauling off the offending boots. "They hurt."

"Did you kill any of them?" Clementine wanted to know.

"Whenever I'm out of her sight for two minutes she thinks I'm killing someone! Do I look like a homicidal maniac?"

"The only homicidal maniac I ever saw was one of the meekest-looking men in the world," contributed Knight helpfully. "You expected him to apologize for living."

"No, *petite*." Brandon, having eased his feet a trifle, started to strip off the uniform. "I didn't kill anyone."

"What a pity," pouted Clementine.

"What a bloodthirsty baby it is! D'you hate them so much?"

"Yes." An odd look flashed across her face as she said it. She picked up the uniform jacket that the major had thrown to the floor and absently worried one of the buttons with thin, nervous fingers. Brandon finished dressing. "Clementine, if anyone questions you about tonight, I came home with you and stayed"—he looked at his watch—"till about four. You don't know anything else." He folded her hand over some bills.

"Will you come again?" she asked a little forlornly, as she watched Knight make a bundle of the German uniform.

"Maybe, *petite*." To Knight's amazement, Brandon bent and planted an almost paternal salute on her forehead. "Good night and thanks."

CHAPTER X

THE MAJOR LOSES AN ENEMY



"BUT I told them nothing, absolutely nothing!" Lucien Amiard's pale face was streaked with sweat and his bulging eyes traveled desperately from one face to another of the five men who sat at the end of a bare kitchen table.

It was a repetition of the scene of the night before, except that, instead of being in the Josseland sitting room, it was taking place in a neat and tidy kitchen, a kitchen which should have had a comfortable and home-like atmosphere. The

five silent, grim-faced men somehow made it sinister and cold. And this time, too, Lucien Amiard's role had changed from chief accuser to accused.

"Why don't you ask Achille? He wasn't arrested! Why not?" he demanded frantically and answered his own question, "Because he's their spy."

"Achille wasn't out of the sight of someone we know from the time you were arrested until after you were released," said a thin, bleak-faced man in a flat voice.

"You went out after the American arrived." Charles spoke slowly, regarding him with unconcealed contempt. "You were determined to go, though I suggested that Michelette would bring the paper later. You could have got in touch with the Gestapo then."

"But I didn't! I didn't! I spoke to no one but Father Constantine." The bulging eyes darted around frantically, then with the inspiration of despair, he exclaimed, "Télémaque knew! He might have sent for them when he brought the message from the chief."

"Why? If Télémaque had not sent word to the chief of the trial, the American would have been shot. Why should he save him from being shot only to betray him to the Gestapo?"

"The Gestapo want him alive."

"How do you know?"

"I don't know. But it stands to reason they would. He would know a lot. Télémaque could have done it." It was hard to tell whether Lucien's labored breathing was caused by his asthma or panic.

Michelette, who had been rooted to her chair in a kind of frozen horror, turned to Achille. "No, no," she whispered. "Télémaque is loyal, Achille. You know he is loyal."

"I know that you love him," he said in a low voice that reached only her.

"I've tried so hard not to, Achille," she whispered and looked very young and unhappy.

"I know. I've watched. You can't help it." He spoke as one would speak to a child.

"The house was being watched before Michelette could have told Télémaque," said Josserand heavily. "Tell us again what the Gestapo captain said to you

at the time he released you, Charles."

"He said, 'Your brother-in-law is a wise man. He sees the wisdom of cooperating with us. You might all profit by his example'," quoted Charles.

"You were questioned, Amiard, and immediately afterwards released. Then all the other people arrested last night were released also and told by the captain that he had found out what he wanted to know." The thin, sad face of the bleak-faced man grew bleaker. "Who else could have told them?"

"Any of them!" said Lucien wildly. "Charles, Papa Josserand, Mama, Michelette—they had all seen the American. Any of them could have described him."

"They were all together in the big cell with the others arrested. Only two people were questioned individually before you, Amiard. Civot and his wife. Neither of them knew anything about the American. You did. After you were questioned, everyone was released and the description of the American was circulated a few hours later." The flat voice returned again to the damning evidence, then went on. "You also knew of the rendezvous Tissier had with the plane. Tissier was arrested. There have been other things, too, which you knew."

"But others knew them. You must believe me! You can't do this to me." Lucien's voice trailed away as he met the unrelenting stares of the five men.

"Messieurs, we will vote." The bleak-faced man passed slips of paper to the other four men. "Unless anyone has any questions to ask the accused?"

No one had. The men took pencils and wrote on the little squares, folded them over and passed them back.

"Michelette, we had better go into the other room," Achille said gently.

"I must stay." She seemed hypnotized with horror. "I can't somehow believe it. Surely they won't—"

"You are beginning to see what I have tried to show you. Destruction only destroys those who would use it as a weapon."

The bleak-faced man was speaking again. "Four votes of guilty. One of innocent. You know the penalty."

"No, no! I'm innocent, I tell you! I never told them anything. I beg of you, I



"We had better go into the other room," Achille said gently.

implore you—" Lucien pitched down onto his knees, his body wobbling, his face distorted, and his hands thumping the table-top. "You can't—you can't—you can't—" It broke into sobs.

"You have half an hour," said the bleak-faced man coldly.



IN the blacked-out quietness of the shop, Brandon and Knight talked to Arnaudet. The old plumber pressed a spring and revealed a hidden compartment built into the back of an advertisement of stable drainage. "Neat, isn't it? If anyone were to try to break it down, there is enough explosive packed under there to blast the whole shop. It was done by a man who had been an engineer." He took out a list of names and handed it to Brandon who rubbed his bloodshot eyes wearily and carried it to the light.

He consulted the list he had taken from Colonel Ehrwahlt's briefcase, but he didn't give it to Arnaudet. He made a series of check marks on Arnaudet's paper and handed it back to him. "They've managed to get men into the units I've checked."

"I'll order the unit leaders to assemble." The old man spoke a little wearily. "It may be difficult, Major, to handle them. There have been so many executions recently and still the leaks have continued."

Brandon nodded. "Not only must the traitors be liquidated," he said, "but their units must be broken up immediately and the men—and where possible, their families—shipped out of this district. Each spy will have reported the men with whom he had contact. Obviously the police left them at large in the belief that it was better to have men they knew operating against them than men they didn't know and because the spy will have kept them informed of his group's activities. The moment the spy is killed, the reason for leaving the men at large is much less."

Arnaudet looked at his watch. "There's another drumhead trial tonight. Lucien Amiard. They think he supplied the Gestapo with the description of you," Arnaudet said to Knight, "among other things. I think there is little doubt that they will find him guilty."

"Get the unit leaders together," ordered Brandon suddenly. "I'll deal with them. But be quick. The moment Ehrwahlt discovers his case has been rifled, there'll be hell to pay. Knight, take these." He handed him the instructions concerning Plan 24-843D. "Have Cibault make copies to 90 out via Lisbon. Then get back here."

"Will you be here?"

"Yes. I'm going to sleep."

When Knight returned an hour and a half later, he found the major upstairs in Arnaudet's bed, sleeping the sleep of exhaustion. They waked him with some difficulty.

"Major, d'you suppose that what you have is a complete list of their spies?" Arnaudet asked.

"For the district under Ehrwahlt's command, yes." Brandon went over to the corner and splashed some water from a pitcher over his face. "Andrée seemed to think Brundt wouldn't dare give him only a partial one."

Arnaudet was watching him speculatively. "Then your job is done?" he asked.

Brandon shook his head. "We still don't know who the traitor in the key position is," he said. "It's none of these men. They could betray their own groups, in most cases only five men, and they could betray a unit leader. None of them have access to all the communications."

"Télémaque handles them all."

"I know. He must be replaced."

"But is he—"

"I know nothing against Télémaque," interrupted Brandon quickly. "His name isn't on this list. But whoever intercepts our communications must know that Télémaque sends and receives them. He's probably been left alone on the same principle that it's better to have someone they know handle them than someone they don't know. But anyway, he is marked. He'd better not go back to his house. I've an idea there may be a general round-up, and he's too good a man to lose. Who replaces him?"

"Gaston Dunoir."

"See to it. And tell Dunoir to send no messages of any kind until I give the word. None. By short wave or messenger. D'you understand? Impress on him that the order must come from me, from you or from Knight. Never mind who else arrives and says they have instructions or even written orders. He's to pay no attention."

"Only to act on orders from one of us three in person?"

"Yes. And Arnaudet, don't send any messages until I tell you."

"*Entendu*," said Arnaudet simply. He looked at the clock. "The unit leaders will be there by now."

"The crypt of Notre Dame de Secours?"

"Go in the vestry door. It will be open. You knew Father Constantine before. D'you remember him?"

"Certainly."

As he opened the door, Arnaudet said, "Lucien Amiard could have seen most of the communications. You don't think that perhaps he has been responsible for some of the leaks? If he informed the other night, he may have done it before."

A thin smile twisted Brandon's lips but didn't touch his eyes. He took Ehrwahlt's list from his pocket. "I didn't show you this, did I? Charles Buisson is the spy in the Jossierand house."

"There wouldn't be two!"

"That's right. Lucien Amiard is not a traitor."

"*Mon Dieu!* But it is too late now. He will have been executed. His body is even now floating down the canal!" Arnaudet



"No, I must stay."
Michelette seemed hypnotized with horror.

stopped and stared, a dawning realization in his face that gave way to something between awe and fear as he looked into the light gray eyes that were watching him. It would be a long time before he would forget the one glimpse he had had before they were again masked.

"Perhaps this will have a salutary effect." Brandon seemed faintly amused by the expression in the old man's face. "When you set up machinery to try and, if necessary, execute traitors, it is not meant to be used for a hysterical witch-hunt. And that's what seems to have happened here."

Knight was silent as they walked through the quiet streets to the church. If he loved a woman and some man had led a gang who had stripped, beaten and nearly killed her, and he held the man's life in his hands, would he have let him die? He didn't think so and knew with an uncomfortable clarity that it wouldn't have been from a moral sense or a sense of justice, but from squeamishness, which was no credit to him. He could not conceive of himself causing death in any circumstances except direct combat. Once he knew that Brandon turned his head towards him, and he imagined there was a derisive smile on his face, as if the major knew what he was thinking. But he only imagined it; for it was still too dark for him to have seen.

CHAPTER XI

AMBUSH TO ORDER



THE crypt with its Norman arches had an air of unreality which was heightened by the single lamp whose light seemed to accentuate the shadows rather than provide illumination. The men who were gathered there looked tired and drawn; most of them had been wakened and had dressed hurriedly, not stopping to shave, and made their way through the pre-dawn coldness, a prey to the thousand apprehensions that were perpetual companions to each and every one of them.

Brandon wasted no time. Leaning against one of the Norman arches, the medieval lamp highlighting the gaunt sternness of his face, he said, "Many of you knew me three years ago, though you didn't know my name. I was just one of many. British agents sent to help you. I have come back this time to root out the traitors. I know who they are." He went on to explain the necessity for action being swift and sure. "There is at least one in each unit whose leader is present. That's why I sent for you. All of you have been given a plan for dispersing the members of your units and their immediate families. That must be done at once." He took the list from his pocket. "These are the traitors." He read it, occasionally glancing at the faces around him. There was a moment's complete silence when he had finished.

"Two weeks ago my unit brought a man to trial," said an old man with a weather-beaten face. "He was shot. Since then there have been no leaks. I find it hard to believe there is another traitor."

"And they won't even get the benefit of a trial," protested a second man.

"One should be very sure," said a third. "So many times recently men have been shot and each time it is said that it will be the end of the betrayals, and each time there are new ones," objected a fourth.

Arnaudet had been right, thought Brandon. Suspicion had got in its corroding work; they didn't trust their own judgment or the judgment of their leaders. The mission of the Gestapo to spread confusion had been well done.

"We are not being betrayed by the men in our units," the second man spoke again. "Many of us feel that."

"The betrayals come from higher up."

"How sure are you that you've got the right men now?" demanded the first man.

"If I can prove to you that one name on this list, any name you like to pick, is a traitor," Brandon said slowly, "will it satisfy you?"

A number of voices spoke at once. "Any name?" asked one man above the others.

"Any name. I would ask you to pick someone who can be reached quickly. Time is short."

Again many voices were raised at once. At last the weather-beaten man who had spoken first said, "How do we choose?"

Brandon tossed the list down on the tomb of some old-time Norman baron whose name at the foot was hardly legible. "Try a blindfold and a pin," he suggested, "but make it someone we can get quickly." He turned away and sat down, turning with a weary, sardonic smile to Knight. "It'll waste time," he said, "but it'll be worth it as an investment. These men are going to be scattered among a whole lot of other units and we don't want them going unwillingly and taking suspicion with them."

"What are you going to do?"

"Give 'em some bait and watch them walk into the trap."

The weather-beaten old man came up. "Charles Buisson," he said.

"Good. On the corner of the Boulevard de la Victoire, the next street after the Café Persan, there are four empty shops," began Brandon.

"The corner of the Rue Louis Quinze," supplied someone.

"Send a message to Charles Buisson and tell him to be at the third shop at"—he looked at his watch—"fifteen minutes to eight. He will find the door is broken and he can get in. That is the one you were in, isn't it?" he asked Knight.

"Yes. The door's right off its hinges and it isn't boarded up yet."

"Tell him that Major Brandon will meet him there, that he has a special assignment for him."

"But—" began Knight.

Brandon frowned at him. "That bait will bring out the Gestapo in truckloads, to judge by the size of the reward they

were offering. Then call—" He picked up the list again and scanned it. "I seem to remember that Robert Vario was about my size."

"He is, monsieur, though he is not so dark as you."

"That's near enough. Can you get him quickly?" The man who had spoken said he could. "Good. Does he live near the corner of the Boulevard and Louis Quinze?"

"About five minutes."

"At ten minutes to eight then, get word to him that he is to go at once to that same shop—and that someone will meet him there who will give him instructions. Meanwhile, you can post a man in that ruined building opposite to watch what happens."

Knight relaxed. There was something rather devilish about the simplicity of the scheme. Brandon was speaking again. "Both of these men will undoubtedly be arrested by the Gestapo. I think we may take it for granted that they will already have done all the damage that they can." He turned to the two leaders in whose groups Buisson and Vario were. "But the men of your units and their families must be got under cover at once."



CHARLES BUISSON was feeling rather pleased with himself. He had never liked his brother by marriage, Lucien, and some-

times recently he had begun to think that Josserrand and Achille suspected him. He had always tried to direct any suspicions towards Achille, whose professed pacifism made him a useful scapegoat. In this he had been unwittingly helped by Lucien, who disliked Achille. The combination of circumstances that had, with one blow, removed Lucien from the family circle and removed any possible suspicion from himself was more than fortunate. He had been lucky the night before last. Shortly after Knight had arrived, he had made a trip to the outside toilet and given the pre-arranged signal to the Gestapo man stationed in the tool shed of the neighboring garden. The house had been surrounded shortly after. Then later when Knight had been condemned, Charles, knowing that the police would not close in and raid because they wanted to fol-

low "Major Brandon," had made another trip to the toilet and managed to warn the watcher at the back that if they wanted this American alive, they had better raid the house quickly. Then of course Télémaque had come and Knight had left. It wasn't Charles' fault that the man who started to follow him had been found with his throat slit.

Yes, he had been lucky. Later, no one had recalled his entirely natural little errands. But afterwards, when they were herded down to police headquarters, he had been nervous; he had felt that Josserrand had suspected something. Yet what could he have seen to arouse his suspicions? It was all so simple and fool-proof. It was the custom to note down the prisoners' names, addresses, descriptions, nearest of kin, the amount of money and jewelry they had with them and any injuries they might have sustained before being brought in. Captain Brundt had arranged that a special officer should register any informer. The desks were out of earshot of anyone and all the informer had to do was pass on his news while the officer was filling out the forms. But somehow Charles had thought that Josserrand had seemed a little peculiar in his manner when they were herded into the cells immediately afterwards. So it was just as well that there was someone on whom they could saddle all the leaks of information up to the present.

And now on top of that, this superlative new piece of good luck: The most wanted man in the District, the English spy, was being delivered into his, Charles Buisson's hands! It would put him high in the esteem of the Gestapo and might even lead to one of those official positions that they frequently talked about, always with distressing vagueness. There was also the reward, no mean inducement in itself.

He would have to be careful, of course, particularly about the money. The man who sold out the English major was not going to be popular. He shivered a little as he recollected the fate of one or two traitors. There had been the men they had tied to two teams of farm horses which had been whipped in opposite directions; he hadn't been able to sleep for some time after witnessing that. Then

there had been the episode of Andrée Santrieul. He had pretended to stay home that night, but he had sneaked out to watch. He knew that if the patrol had not come along when it did, she would have been beaten to death. Yes, he would have to be careful about the money, until after the war, anyway. Then he could get out of the country.

With the unfounded optimism that so often accompanies advanced tuberculosis, he was quite sure that he would see the end of the war and have the opportunity to spend the money. Even though a spasm of coughing broke into the plans he was making, and his handkerchief was flecked with blood, he was sure of the future. He'd show the fools who babbled about France and freedom! They'd soon come to heel. He'd be able to get away from that damned Jossierand family. He had drunk to the dregs the bitter cup of dependence upon his father-in-law. It would be nice, he thought, if he could manage to get rid of his bitch of a wife as well. He hadn't much liked her when dire financial necessity had driven him to marriage and now he loathed her. He looked at the time. He'd better be getting along. There mustn't be a slip-up. Brundt would have got his men there by now; he had said they would be there within three minutes of his telephone call. Early enough for there to be no fear of the Englishman's seeing them arrive and becoming suspicious.



"ALL right, Münch, it's only Buisson," said a low voice as Charles stepped through the shattered door into the shop. For a moment Charles couldn't see anything, then in the almost complete darkness at the back he made out Lieutenant Horsch, one of Brundt's most trusted aides. "No sign of anyone yet," he continued. "I have five men here and five more across the street who'll come in the event of trouble."

"It isn't seven-forty-five yet," said Charles then added what had been on his mind the last few minutes. "I hope there won't be shooting."

"If there is, fall flat on the floor and stay there," the lieutenant told him with some disdain. "When he arrives, say

'Major Brandon,'" he went on. "It isn't necessary, but it would be useful to have his admission to the identity. No one seems to have seen this man. I understand you haven't."

"No."

"I'd better get back out of sight." Lieutenant Horsch disappeared. Charles didn't much like him but he wished he'd stay. He wanted someone to talk to. Now that it had come to the point, he was nervous and not only about the shooting. For the first time he was having misgivings. It all seemed too simple, too easy. The English major was said to be known only to two or three people. Why should he make himself known now? Why should he arrange a meeting in a place like this that was so ideal for an ambush? Someone was pushing aside the smashed door. He had an unfortunate spasm of coughing and when he could see again a muffled figure was coming toward him. The man's face was shadowed by a hat and his jaw was covered by the coat collar which was turned up. Charles started to say "Major Brandon" as he had been ordered, but one again a spasm of coughing interrupted him.

Lieutenant Horsch didn't wait for any admission of identity. His five men clattered out, a harsh voice commanded "Hands up" and the muffled figure was surrounded and seized. The man put up only belated opposition which was half-hearted at best, and in less than a minute he was held firmly between two husky police. There had been no shooting, no violence.

"Now let's have a look at you, Major Brandon!" Horsch snatched off the man's hat, revealing features that might have fitted the circulated description though the mouse-colored hair could hardly have been classified as black.

"There's some mistake," he babbled. "I'm not Major Brandon. I'm Robert Vario. I have my papers." He was about to say something else but he looked at Charles and stopped.

"You have a lot of names, I hear," laughed the lieutenant.

"But I tell you, I don't know anything about Major Brandon." The man passed a quivering tongue over parched lips. "Take me to Captain Brundt."

CHAPTER XII

ANDRÉE TAKES AN ASSIGNMENT

"That's just where you're going. The captain has waited a long time to meet you." Horsch turned to Charles. "You're to come back to headquarters, too." He regarded Charles with considerable contempt. "What are you going to do with your blood money?"

"I don't know," said Charles absent-mindedly. He was beginning to have a dreadful conviction that somehow the plan had gone wrong.

In the shadow of the ruined building on the opposite corner, Knight turned to the weather-beaten old man. "I expect you've seen enough, haven't you?" he asked.

The old man chuckled. "I'd like to see Brundt's face when he finds out what he's got," he replied. They started back towards the church. "Major Brandon has a sense of the fitness of things," he observed.

Back at the crypt, a very few words from the weather-beaten old man sufficed to convince the assembled unit leaders. Apologetically and a little sheepishly, they left to carry out their orders, their confidence and faith in their leaders completely restored.

"You need sleep," Brandon told Knight. "You'd better go to Cibault's and get some."

"D'you really think this may stop the leaks?" asked Knight.

The major shook his head. "They are plugged for the moment," he answered, "and that's all. We haven't reached the man who gets the important information. Nor have we reached the man who supplied the description of me. No one on that Gestapo list knew me." Brandon's gray eyes were abstracted. "I've sent word to Télémaque Bordages. I want to question him about all messages that have gone in and out during the past three weeks."

"They must have got a man into the London end, I suppose," replied Knight wearily. "How will you get in touch with me?"

"I'm going back to the hotel and get a couple of hours sleep before I go to Andrée." A completely mirthless smile twisted Brandon's mouth. "I mustn't forget I'm working for the Gestapo. You'd better stay at Cibault's. Then I'll know where to find you."



THE soldier stationed outside Andrée's flat looked Brandon over superciliously and inquired, "Pierre Desgranges?"

A hundred possibilities, each worse than the other, shot through his mind. Had she been arrested? By now the colonel must have discovered the loss of his papers. Had he suspected her of complicity in the theft? Or had Brundt decided that as an auxiliary agent, Monsieur Desgranges could be dispensed with? However, denying the identity now would close the only door that was open to him; and anyway, soldiers didn't usually make arrests for the Gestapo. He nodded, reaching for identity papers.

"Madame left a note for you." The soldier handed over an envelope which contained a single sheet of her handwriting.

Dear Pierre:

I have promised to sing for the men at the military hospital. If you come while I am out and you are free for a while, walk up there, show this to the guard and he will let you in.

Andrée

At the hospital another soldier directed him to a car that was standing at the side of the courtyard, a military chauffeur beside it. He said, "Monsieur Desgranges? Madame will be out in a few minutes. You can sit in the car."

Brandon didn't immediately avail himself of the opportunity. He lighted a cigarette and ran his finger over the cracks in the shatter-proof glass of one window.

"Bullet," announced the chauffeur. He spoke passable French. "Almost as dangerous driving Madame Santrieu as driving Colonel Ehrwahlt. You people don't seem to know what's good for you."

"Do people ever know that?" queried Brandon carelessly.

"You'd think they'd learn," replied the man. "Ungrateful, too. Now take this town. It isn't big but when we came, the traffic tangles that used to happen in that old market place were"—he searched for a word—"schrecklich! It took half an hour to get across it. That's all been done away with. Within twenty-four hours we

installed a traffic system and now you can go straight through. Then there's the water. The drainage near the canal was most unhygienic. That's all been remedied. The same with the sewage disposal. And all we get for it is shots in the dark, knives in the back—"

He stopped suddenly, coming to rigid attention. Brandon looked around for the cause and saw Andrée on the steps of the hospital, speaking to a gray-haired doctor and another officer. She detached herself quickly and came to him.

"I hope you haven't been waiting very long. I thought we might drive somewhere, as it's stopped raining at last."

They talked of Paris as the car sped out of town. The conversation could have been repeated verbatim to the Gestapo without the slightest risk. Andrée leaned forward suddenly. "Stop here, Baumer."

They got out and walked a little, skirting a small copse of firs. Four cows grazed in the field in front of them; at the far side, a line of poplars marked the tow path beside the canal, and beyond it the landscape stretched with the illusion of peace peculiar to flat landscapes. Andrée sat on the stump of a tree, making room for him beside her.

"Baumer will stay with the car," she said. "He won't get agitated as long as I'm within sight." There was silence for a while, a restful, contented silence, then she said irrelevantly, "It's queer how selfish humans are."

"The originality of that remark is stupendous," he mocked.

She made a little face at him. "If we were completely honest with ourselves, we'd admit that at the moment we don't give a damn for our comrades, our countries or the whole world."

"Of course we don't. Likewise, if we're smart, we're not often completely honest even with ourselves."

"Particularly with ourselves," she amended.

"Quite. It's too uncomfortable."

"You are."

"What? Uncomfortable? Something is sticking into my rear." He shifted a little.

"Honest with yourself."

"Not if I can avoid it."

"You have more of a capacity for looking things straight in the face, whether

you like them or not, than anyone I've ever known."

"Up to a point I'm a realist," he admitted, "but I have my lapses into self-deception."

"You've never let me see a lapse."

"You haven't recognized it. That's because you suffer from the same brand of self-deception."

"The brand being?"

"We like to think we're being useful. That what we're doing is worth while. That it's contributing to the ultimate bettering of humanity."

"That we're laying the foundations for a brave new world?" queried Andrée.

"This is the second brave new world I've seen come along in my lifetime," he replied.

"I don't doubt people were hoping the same thing during the war of 1870."

"It's a natural defense mechanism of man. When he finds the affairs of his world in too utterly depressing a muddle, he consoles himself with thinking that out of the whole chaotic mess will be born the brave new world."

"You don't believe it."



THE man squinted at the grazing cows and shrugged his shoulders. "Perhaps it will. But I think the labor will be prolonged and I don't know that I want to be present at the delivery."

"But perhaps one gets the struggling and a large part of the suffering out of one's system. They go hand in hand. When you stop struggling, you stop suffering. You see your path ahead of you. You know you must travel it and you stop paying much attention to the path itself. You know it will end."

"And the end is—what?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Heaven, hell, Nirvana, oblivion. Don't ask me. I'm no professor of eschatology. It is enough that there is an end."

"That's a sort of decadent predestination theory." She took a cigarette from a case and handed it to him. "If you really believed it, you'd jump in the nearest canal."

"That would be cowardly."

"And that's pure convention. You were brought up on the slogan, 'When all the

blandishments of life are gone, the coward sneaks to death, the brave live on." Some Greek or other said it, didn't he?"

"It was an Englishman named Sewell," he corrected her mildly. "But it's not entirely convention. You're wrong there. I have a strong and healthy animal instinct of self-preservation. If someone came at me with an ax and tried to murder me, I'd fight and kill him, or do my best to, not because I look forward to the future with either optimism or pleasure, but because the instinct of self-preservation is stronger than anything except the discipline of love or duty."

The word duty brought her up short. She had almost forgotten. They had been arguing and wrangling as contentedly as they used to in Paris. It seemed so long ago. Brandon saw the shadow creep over her face and knew what she was thinking. He said, "D'you remember that last night in Paris?"

"I remember."

"I wanted you so terribly, not only as a woman but as a symbol of completion. I would have been content if everything had ended then, and in an odd way, it seemed as if everything did. What has come since has been something that had to be got through, that had to be done, and the hours we've had have been like a windfall."

"Which only serves to wake the pain."

The figure of the chauffeur pacing up and down outside the car reminded him that time was short. He told her what he had done. "... and I'm still no nearer the man I'm after," he ended. "And it's Wednesday now."

"If it is someone in London," she said slowly, "wouldn't it be easier to find out from there?"

"It's been tried, you know. Smithshand had a flock of men working on that idea."

"But not you."

He smiled somewhat wily at the implication that he would succeed where all others failed. "Everyone's been watched and checked on. Even Rodopin, whom he's known for twenty years, and St. Paul and all the people in St. Paul's office. If it is one of them, they've been clever and careful. It would take too long to do anything from that end now. I need tomorrow and Friday to see the unit leaders

and give them their instructions, so that they'll have two clear days to make their dispositions." A squadron of medium bombers roared overhead. He watched them abstractedly. "Knight can take care of that."

She looked up sharply, a sudden fear in her face. All afternoon the knowledge of the hostages had hung like a forbidden thought in her mind. She had read the same thought behind the quizzical tenderness in his gray eyes. They met hers now, and there was nothing quizzical or tender about them; they were bleak and grim. "I must know by tonight," he said.

"Do you want me to see if I can get anything out of Brundt?" she asked at last.

"Is he another of your conquests?" he countered.

She shrugged her shoulders and ignored the bitterness. "He hates me, really, but he'd like to possess me. Ehrwahl has stopped him annoying me. He used to send for me regularly and have me questioned and searched, until the colonel put his foot down."

"Bloody swine," muttered Brandon. She was silent and after a while he asked, "Any way of getting my hands on him? I'd get it out of him."

"He would come to my dressing room if I sent for him," she said slowly. "The window looks out onto an alley. There's a guard at the end of the alley. But if someone took care of the guard, and you came to see me . . ." She thought for a moment. "It would put an end to my usefulness, of course. But if it's worth that, and this looks as if it were, he could be knocked out and shoved through the window to someone outside."

"You'd go with us then," said Brandon quickly.

"I'd be more useful if I covered up," she said, "and I could, you know."



HE was silent because he knew it was true. They might gain ten or fifteen minutes that way. "There's another alternative. I could knock you out and leave you on the floor. It would be some time before they'd come and look—and it would clear you."

"I don't like Brundt," she said after a while, "but he's got plenty of physical

courage. I think it would take a long time to crack him, if you could ever manage it."

"He likes women, doesn't he?" asked Brandon.

"Yes. But even that—" She broke off. "You're ruthless."

He nodded. "I don't approve of war, Andrée. It's inhuman and utterly futile. But when you're in a war"—he squinted again at the peacefully grazing cattle—"I believe in getting it over as quickly as possible and winning. The idea of trying to make it humane merely seems absurd to me—a contradiction in terms."

"You don't have to defend yourself to me." She gave a rather tired smile. She knew so well what drove him, better almost than he knew himself. One job after another down through the years, urgent and imperative, with lives hanging on their success or failure. He had fought with the weapons that had been used against him; nothing had been barred and he had fought to win. And he sought to drug the memories in the violent action and danger of the next job. And now the efficacy of the drug was wearing off because he didn't care any more what the outcome was. With an effort she brought herself back to the matter in hand. "You can break any man if you have time, I suppose," she said.

He shook his head. "You kill some first, and others go mad. You break them, yes. But you don't always find out what they know. I think you're probably right about Brundt. He could be tricked, perhaps. He's vain."

"I have a perfectly good excuse to go to see him. You have been showing an unhealthy interest in de Gaullist activities."

"Won't he find it suspicious that you suddenly want to inform?"

"I am slowly coming to the conclusion that they are the winners. That will be my line. Being a woman, I like the conqueror. I love their strength and power."

"Then he—"

"That's the idea. It's very simple. But how much I'll get out of him—" she ended with a shrug.

For a moment the normally primitive man took hold of Brandon. "I'll be damned if you will! I'd rather—"

"That's childish," she said impatiently. "Can't you think of a woman, of me, as something beyond just a body to possess? If there's any future for us, will the fact that Brundt has had his will with me take anything from us? And if there is no future, can't we remember what we've had? Nothing that anyone can do will ever touch that."

"Those are words, Andrée. Nice, sophisticated arguments that don't mean a damned thing. This is something you feel."

"Thinking with your blood?" She shot him a mischievous smile.

"I know, but to send you out to—" He looked up with a smile, the tragic weariness of which told her the full depth of his fatigue of body, brain and soul. "I'm human, you know," he added, then went on again in a different tone. "Well, see what you can do with Brundt. I shall go and report to him at eight and say you laughed at my alleged interest in the de Gaullists and wanted to know what on earth a school teacher would do in a conspiracy. I'll come to the café later."

She stood up and took two steps in the direction of the car, then turned. "Tell me you love me."

"Oh, God, Andrée! Don't you know it?"

She gave a funny little smile. "I like to hear you say it."

CHAPTER XIII

ACHILLE MAKES A GIFT



Arnaudet's plan for the dispersal of his units had been painstakingly worked out a long time before and now that the necessity had come to use it, everyone knew where he had to go and what he had to do. It wasn't possible, of course, for such a large number of people to leave town en masse. But by midday, every man and his immediate family had disappeared from his home. Then in groups of five and six, they would gradually be dispersed to other districts, there to continue their work. There wasn't much grumbling. Some of the women complained about things they had had to leave behind, but they had always known that this might happen and most of them had already

made their preparations. Family treasures had been hidden away or sent to relatives with farms. There is always somewhere on a farm that you can hide things, even from the Gestapo.

Among others who were being temporarily sheltered in the homes of sympathizers, were the Josserand family. Their hostess had showed them an embarrassed sympathy on account of the "liquidation" of Lucien the night before. By now Josserand, who had a genius for self-deception, had convinced himself that he had known all along that his eldest daughter's husband was a traitor. In reality, he had never suspected Lucien of anything except of being lazy and a fortune-hunter, both of which things weren't suspicious but amply proven facts. Secretly, he was rather pleased that Lucien was eliminated; he was an expense. He suspected that his daughter was not too heartbroken, either. Of course, it was awkward to have a traitor in the family but, after all, Lucien had not been a blood relation.

"Michelette has not come, nor Charles," his wife reminded him.

"Charles went out on a mission this morning. I heard the messenger come," he said. "They will have warned him. But Michelette! Where can she be? Where is Achille?"

"In the kitchen writing, as usual, or poring over one of his Greek books," snorted Madame Josserand in disgust.

Josserand waddled down to the kitchen. "Where is Michelette?" he demanded.

Achille looked up for a minute from the exercise book in which he was writing, and a faint smile crossed his haggard face. "Out, looking for Télémaque."

"Aren't you man enough to stop your wife from chasing shamelessly around after another man? *Mon Dieu*, you have not the backbone of a jellyfish! I don't know what I've done to deserve such daughters! One married to a traitor! And another—"

"To a jellyfish. I appreciate how upsetting it must be," mocked Achille.

"Our orders were to come directly here and remain here," said Josserand. "She had no business going looking for Télémaque. How can you sit there and tell me you permitted it?"

"What should I have done? Knocked her down and bound her?"

"Suppose she is picked up by the police?"

"D'you suppose I haven't thought of that?" A sudden harsh note crept into Achille's voice. He slammed down the exercise book on top of a volume of Greek verse.

Josserand stared for a moment, then shrugged his shoulders and went back to his wife, in whom he confided that he had been cursed with useless sons-in-law and that men were different now from what they had been in his day. Many hours later, he was again discoursing on the same theme when he heard the front door close. He hurried to peer over the banister rail to see who it was, but it was only his hostess, going back to the kitchen. "I thought someone came," he said.

"Achille went out," she told him. "Poor boy, he couldn't stand it any longer. He is gone to search for Michelette."



ANDRÉE had dropped Brandon off at the corner of the old market place and he made his way to Cibault's, picked up Knight whom he found snoring contentedly and loudly, and went on to the house where Télémaque Bordages had taken refuge. There, in addition to Télémaque, they found Achille Dupré and another man who was introduced as Gaston Dunoir, the man who was going to take over Bordages' duties.

"Find out what Dupré is doing here," Brandon told Knight and took Télémaque and Dunoir into the kitchen. For nearly an hour he questioned the engineer. "We keep coming back to this man, Daudet," he said at last.

"But he was sent to investigate the leaks," protested Télémaque. "The leaks had been before Daudet came."

"I know—and since. He seems to have asked more questions about the set-up of the organization than about the people who could have betrayed it," observed Brandon.

"But he came with the password from London and messages from both Rodopin and St. Paul," Télémaque repeated protestingly.

"They aren't infallible, either of them," said the Britisher. "What else d'you know about Daudet?"

"He had been in London for some months. He was from Alsace. He told me he had got out of the country across the Pyrenees. He'd been through a terrible lot, getting out." Télémaque scratched his blond head and finished. "I'm ready to distrust my own shadow now, monsieur, but I don't see *how* he could have been a traitor."

"I wish I'd known about him before I left London, so that our fellows could have checked on him. Thousands of refugees have been admitted into England since the armistice," Brandon explained. "We try to investigate them, but a few spies are bound to slip in."

"I understand that. But how—"

"If he could fool British Intelligence, he could probably fool Rodopin and St. Paul. And all that was needed was to get St. Paul's confidence—or Rodopin's. This Daudet might even be a Gestapo man traveling on the papers of someone who is dead or in a concentration camp."

"I hadn't thought of that." Télémaque's handsome features were furrowed. "Or d'you think the leak has been in London? If someone in the headquarters there were a traitor and had sent his man—"

"That also I have considered."

"Couldn't that be cleared up from the London end?"

"It's got to be done from here and by tonight," said Brandon abruptly.

"You are the English major the Gestapo are so eager to locate?" asked Dunoir suddenly.

"Why?" Brandon knew that his name had not been mentioned.

"I was wondering if that had something to do with the haste. The hostages, I mean. It is by midnight tonight that the time is up."

"You know as well as I do," interposed Télémaque, "the rule is that no man shall surrender himself to save hostages."

For an instant Brandon looked at Télémaque as if he was going to speak, then he changed his mind and turned to Dunoir. "You understand about the messages?" he asked.

"None shall go, monsieur. Have no fear." The Britisher looked down into the brown, wind-roughened face of Dunoir and was satisfied.

"Now, about this Achille Dupré," he

said. "He seems to know a lot, considering he isn't one of you."

"Achille is not an informer, though I don't understand him," replied Télémaque. "He does not seem able to hate."

Brandon opened the door and called to Knight, who came in looking perplexed. "Why's he here?"

"He thought Michelette might be here. She left fourteen Rue d'Isley, where the Jossrand family are hiding, some time ago to look for Télémaque."

"Dunoir, on your way," ordered Brandon. "The less contact you have with anyone, the better. I'll talk to Dupré."



A FEW minutes later he was studying Achille's haggard, ravaged features with thoughtful eyes that had summed up many men over the years. Brandon seldom made a mistake in his judgment of men: he couldn't afford to. He saw the frown of pain as Achille eased the weight from his artificial leg. "I'm told you don't sympathize much with our activities," he said.

"I just don't believe that it's the best way to meet the situation," answered Achille wearily. "Monsieur will surely allow me my opinion."

"Your idea of meeting the situation seems to be to lie down and let them tramp over you," observed Knight acidly.

"I haven't the stomach to assassinate a sentry in the dark, knowing that ten innocent lives will pay for my action," Achille told him, then continued to Brandon, "I don't believe in war, monsieur."

"But you fought in it." Brandon glanced down at his leg.

"Fought? I retreated, ignominiously, with my regiment."

"You went when you were called."

"There were many things I hadn't learned, then. I thought the opinion of others was important, that they should not think me a coward. I was willing to betray my principles for my vanity. I was a coward, monsieur, but I did not know it."

Knight said, "He always talks like that. He's beyond me. And he's making a new translation of some of Pindar's odes." He pointed to the book in Achille's hand, as if this alone were evidence enough that the man was incomprehensible.

Brandon held out his hand for the slim volume and looked at the page where it fell open. "As to what shall befall us from Zeus," he construed effortlessly, thereby causing great envy in Knight who harbored miserable scholastic recollections of struggles with Greek, "no sure presage attends man, whereby they may foreknow the decrees of Providence; but still we indulge bold designs and are eagerly bent on many schemes; for the limbs of man are bound by insatiate hope, but the courses of human actions and of future events lie remote from our forethought." He closed the book and handed it back. "Somehow it would be Pindar," he said.

"Why?" Knight stared.
"There's something hard and stony about his writing."

"It has the sublimity and nakedness of a rock, monsieur," said Achille, as he watched Brandon leaf through the exercise book where he had written his translations.

A sudden knocking on the outer door brought the instant alertness of hunted men to all their faces. Télémaque listened at the passage door.

"It is Michelette," he said.
"*Dieu merci!*" Relief drained what little color there was from Achille Dupré's face and he passed an unsteady hand over his forehead.

Michelette came in, her little face drawn with worry. "Télémaque!" Her eyes lighted. "I have been so frightened. I was afraid—" Then she saw her husband. "Achille, how did—"

"You did not return, my dear, and we became anxious."

"You are sure you weren't followed?" demanded Brandon.

"Oh, I was very careful. Achille, may I speak with Télémaque?"

"But why not? The room across the hall is empty." An unconsciously tragic smile curved the man's mouth as he watched them go.

As soon as the door of the other room was closed, Michelette said, "Télémaque, Achille knows."

"He has known for some time," answered the man.

"He is good and kind, even though he won't help with the work. He doesn't seem to understand how I feel about it."

"He reasons too much, reasons and analyzes."

"I couldn't go, Télémaque, not knowing when I'd ever see you, not knowing where you'd be."

"What are we going to do?"

"What can we do? Achille has been so ill, we cannot hurt him, though sometimes I wonder if he'd mind. He does not seem to mind anything."

"You're wrong, Michelette. He tries to persuade himself that he can't be hurt—and to pretend that he can't be—but that is only a defense."

"And there is Father Constantine, too. You know what he would say."

Télémaque's blue eyes shadowed. "He's already said it to me." He was silent for a moment, then went on abruptly. "They're sending me to Havre."

"So far? And we go to St. Remy. You couldn't—they wouldn't—"

"There's work to be done at Havre," he interrupted her almost harshly.

"Dangerous work." On her little face was a dawning awareness under the distress. For the first time she hated the work; for the first time she weighed it in terms of the suffering it could bring to people; it was no longer something romantic and remote which lent a gallant adventure to life. Michelette was growing up and it was a painful process. "Haven't you done enough for them?" she asked and knew before she had finished the sentence what the answer would be.

"Not until we've won."



THE door flew open unceremoniously and Brandon stood in the entrance. "Are you quite sure you weren't followed here?" he demanded.

"I don't think—" she began. "Why?"

"There's a Gestapo car outside."

"What difference does it make if they followed her or not?" asked Télémaque.

"If they followed her, they're probably looking for you. If not, they may be after someone else."

"I did try to be careful." Michelette looked up with wet, frightened eyes into Brandon's face.

"Why—" he started and stopped. It was futile to go into that now. The mischief was done.



Brandon snatched up the machine gun and as the chauffeur came through the door bullets ripped a line across his belly. . . .

"You do not know what it is to be in love, monsieur," she said, her eyes suddenly older and more serious.

"No one ever knows, except the person concerned." A derisive little smile twisted his mouth.

"Five men," reported Knight from the hall. "One is staying with the car. The others are coming up the steps. All armed. One submachine gun."

"If they do not search much, the cupboard under the stairs," said the old man whose house it was.

"They are most likely to be after Télémaque," said Brandon curtly, "and they'll certainly have your description," he added to Knight. "They're not looking for Achilles, as far as we know, or for 'Pierre Desgranges'. Perhaps if they find us, they may go."

There was barely time to get the two men into the cupboard and arrange themselves in the living room so that the group might have the appearance of an innocent social gathering. The good housewife, with a nervous backward glance at her



"When the Gestapo finds out this happened here, we'll all be arrested," wailed the poor housewife.

guests, and a little automatic pat to her severely tidy gray hair, went to answer the door.

"Out here in the hall, everyone. Line up. You, leave that stick." A slight, very blond youth barked the orders, while a stocky man stood, back to the wall, with a machine gun covering the passage. "Lame, are you? Then hop." He kicked with his foot and sent Achille's stick flying. Brandon caught him and righted him. "Now. Papers."

He looked at their papers, grunting

occasionally as he did so. "Search the house."

The two men who had remained in the doorway started about it. The man with the machine gun didn't move.

"You'll save yourselves some trouble if you tell me where Télémaque Bordages is," said the blond youth.

"Télémaque? I haven't seen—" began the old man.

"Not you. You. Come here." He pointed to Michelette, who advanced slowly. "He's your lover, isn't he?"

"No."

"Oh, husband present, eh? Well, you know where he is, anyway."

"He works at the power plant, sir. He will still be there," said Michelette steadily.

"He isn't there and you know it. You came here to meet him. You've been searching for him for three hours. My men have been following you."

She gave a little gasp and was silent.

"No one else in the house, sir," reported the searchers. They were standing in front of the cupboard. One of them kicked his foot against it. "What's this? What's in here?"

"Just some old junk," explained the householder hurriedly.

The policeman shoved it and it didn't yield. "Open it up."

"There is really nothing and I don't know if I can find the key." The old man went slowly over, fumbling with some keys he dragged from his pocket.

"Never mind the key." The police officer stood back and lifted his heavy booted foot. One kick sent the door in. The closet yawned dark and musty in front of him. He hauled a torch from his pocket.

Brandon was calculating their chances, which were not encouraging. Even if they put up no resistance and allowed Knight and Télémaque to be arrested, everyone else would be taken to headquarters as well. They had all aided and abetted the enemy by conspiring to conceal a wanted man from the police. It was a capital offense. The alternative was to deal with the machine gun.

"Get your hands up." The voice and the accented German that issued from the closet was Knight's.

"Drop your weapons and come out with your hands up," snapped the blond officer, "or your friends will be machine-gunned."

Achille's eyes had been fixed on Michelette. Now he drew them away from her with an effort and looked at Brandon. His face was oddly serene. The suffering seemed to have gone out of the eyes that looked into Brandon's gray ones with a steady purpose. Almost regretfully, the Britisher inclined his head a trifle. His right arm, which was obediently hoisted in the air, was sagging a little.

Achille lunged forward. At the instant that he sprang, the machine gun started to chatter. He took it in the guts until a single shot silenced it; then he fell, his arms reaching out to the weapon which was already slipping to the floor.



AFTER he had fired that single shot, Brandon didn't even look at the machine-gunner. Deliberately he aimed at the blond officer who was struggling to drag his weapon from its shiny, polished holster. A third shot he sent into the broad back that stood squarely across the closet door. Thundering reports, curiously distorted by the small space, echoed from the closet itself. Brandon stooped, snatched up the machine gun, opened the hall door and called out, "*Dummkopf! Kommen-Sie herein!*"

The chauffeur, apparently used to being summarily addressed as *Dummkopf*, came running up the steps, his revolver in hand. As he came through the door the machine-gun bullets ripped a line across his belly; he spun around, clutching at the wall, then slid down and lay still.

Michelette was on her knees beside Achille. His features still wore the look of serenity. Télémaque was standing behind her, his face twisted with emotion. Brandon flicked one glance to Knight; he wasn't hurt.

"When they find out this has happened in our house, we'll be arrested," wailed the poor housewife.

"You'll have to leave. Better pack a few things and get ready," snapped Brandon. "The canal's at the bottom of this road, isn't it?"

"Yes, but—" stammered the householder.

"Get those bodies into the car, Knight. Achille's, too. The street's fairly empty. Drive down to the end of the street, set the wheel, jump out and let it go into the canal. It will delay things a little." He turned back to Télémaque, who was holding Michelette although his eyes were fixed on the still forms. "Any arrangements for these people of the house?"

"They can go to Lefebvre. He knows what to do. I will telephone." Télémaque wrenched his eyes unwillingly from the sprawled, uniformed figures on the floor.

I wish I had done it," he said admiringly.

Brandon shrugged his shoulders. "What difference does it make? It's done." He looked for a moment at Michelette, sobbing in Télémaque's arms. "There's going to be a hue and cry about this, and the one person whom they will be sure is involved is you, because those men were following the girl to find you. You'll be a marked man anywhere. Someone else will have to go to Havre. I'll speak to the chief. Take Michelette and get out now, fast—with the first lot that's going."

and the man you love a chance for life. At least do him this last service. Accept the gift he gave you." The sobs had lessened a bit and he added with a half smile, "I may not understand love, Michelette, but at least I recognize it when I see it."

"We must be worthy of it, Michelette." Télémaque spoke awkwardly, as if embarrassed by his own words.

Knight had been peering out of the front door. "Street's empty," he reported. "Give me a hand with them, Télémaque."

"I'll do it in a second," said Brandon.

"The canal at the bottom of the road—that's the place for the bodies. It will delay pursuit."



"That is Naudin and his brother and mother," said Télémaque.

"Do you know where to find them?" Brandon demanded. Télémaque nodded and he repeated, "Then take her and go."

"But I can't leave Achille like that." Michelette's sobs had a sharp note of hysteria.

Brandon swung her around with a rough hand. "Achille didn't care about the rest of us," he said curtly. "He didn't care whether we lived or died. But he walked straight into a machine gun to give you

"Go on, you two children." As Télémaque led Michelette out, he explained to Knight, "We'd only have had hysterics if she'd been here." They got through the grim job as fast as they could. Once a police car screaming past the end of the street halted them, but it passed.

"Meet me at Arnaudet's," ordered Brandon as Knight climbed behind the wheel and started off with his grisly load.

Half an hour later they were both in the office behind the plumber's shop again. "The leak is in London," said Brandon

flatly when he had brought the old man up to date. "But it's got to be cracked from his end."

"If they know." Arnaudet absently tidied a pile of papers on the desk. "Have you thought of that?"

"That whoever is over there reports to Berlin and orders are sent on here? Probably. But Brundt understands the whole problem pretty well, and I should think he knows who their London man is, even if he doesn't deal directly with him."

"This new man may know, too."

"He certainly will know," Brandon said positively and added equally positively, "and you'd kill him before you'd learn anything from him."

Arnaudet shook his head. "Do you not imagine, Major, that I have thought and thought to try to discover a way of finding out from Brundt? But he is well protected and even if we did manage to kidnap him, I don't think we could make him talk either."

"Andrée said that."

"I had thought perhaps that she—" Arnaudet looked up and stopped.

"She's gone to see him now," replied Brandon and his face was impassive.

CHAPTER XIV

RITTER BRINGS A MESSAGE



CAPTAIN BRUNDT was wondering what had brought Andrée Santrieu in to see him. He had a devious mind and was wont to think that people's motives were anything but what they said they were. In this he was quite often correct, because a captain of secret police probably has more lies told to him every day than most citizens hear during a month. There were a variety of solutions to the problem. The damned school teacher, Desgranges, might have doublecrossed him and told her that he had been sent, or he might have done the job so clumsily that she, knowing that he had been questioned during the day, had guessed it herself.

"I always thought you sympathized with these rebels," he said.

"They make trouble," she answered carelessly. "And for what?"

He laughed. "Because they haven't got the brains to know what's good for them.

But you're right. They are a nuisance. Not that I think your friend, Desgranges, would be a very dangerous conspirator."

"The whole idea of his being mixed up with anything political seemed ridiculous," she agreed, "but on the other hand, you never know. Well, you're busy." She began to rise.

"Don't go, Fräulein. Have a cigarette?" He lighted the smoke for her. "Does the colonel know you've come?"

"Why should he?"

"Have you seen him today?"

"No."

"He was robbed last night while he was at your flat."

"Robbed! But he couldn't have been!" It was a good performance of incredulity.

"He was never out of my sight."

"But his briefcase, which I understand he left in the sitting room—"

"I distinctly remember his having it with him when he left," she interrupted. "I handed it to him."

"It had been rifled and some papers stolen."

"But how? He told me that it was always locked."

"Locks have keys."

"I still don't understand. There was a guard out in the hall."

"A man in a soldier's uniform came, said he had a message for the colonel and went in. The colonel never saw him. Did you?"

"A lieutenant came and the colonel left with him."

"This was some ten minutes before the lieutenant, and the man was dressed as an ordinary soldier."

"I didn't see him," she answered truthfully.

"Sometimes they are clever, these traitors." Brundt came and stood by the sofa where she was seated, one booted foot up on the edge; he rested his hand on his knee and felt it was a dashing position. "But it won't do them any good. We're too strong for them."

"I think they are beginning to realize that."

"It's a pity their realization doesn't quiet them down."

"There are always some people who will go on fighting even if they believe the cause is lost," she hazarded.

"I suppose you find that attractive. Women seem to."

"A lost cause? Why?"

"Heaven knows! Yours is not a reasonable sex, Fräulein." He tamped out his cigarette and sat on the settee beside her.



"THEY seem to have a surprisingly large organization," she said idly. Perhaps this wasn't going to be so troublesome, after all.

"They're deluded with false promises by the British. The British will promise people anything to get their fighting done for them." Brundt dismissed the British with contempt.

"But they have their own leaders, I've always heard."

"Who do what the British tell them."

"That sounds like one of your propaganda broadcasts," she laughed.

"It's perfectly true. Their London headquarters is in constant contact with British Intelligence. The British say do this or that, try to blow up this bridge or that factory, and the fools try to do it, and I send them to firing squads."

"If you catch them."

"I'm usually waiting for them," he announced smugly, moving closer to her. He was conscious of a faint surprise that she didn't move away.

"How d'you know what they're trying to do?"

"I've men among them."

"Of course. But hardly in their London headquarters."

"I know everything that goes on in their London headquarters," he boasted. "I could give you a detailed account of everything that was planned there three days ago."

"No wonder you conquer," she murmured admiringly; then, "But I don't believe you know what happened there three days ago."

"I know a lot but I don't know what's going on in your pretty head." His arm was on the back of the sofa, circling her. "This is the first time you've been down to my office, voluntarily. Why?"

"To ask you about Desgranges."

"But you didn't tell the colonel."

She looked up at him provocatively and said, "No." She swept off her hat, shak-

ing loose her shining hair, and lay back against his arm. "You wield an enormous power," she murmured. "It's rather terrifying."

"Why did you come? His dark eyes probed into hers. He was breathing heavily. He wanted this woman. She was beautiful and desirable, though a little too remote and ethereal for his liking. But he wanted to be able to brag that he had had her. Brundt was the kind of man who talked about his women, but oddly enough, he was invariably truthful on the subject. Having most of the attributes of a tomcat, he usually desired any reasonably young and halfway attractive creature in a skirt. But he didn't want to be rebuffed; he had been, before, by Andrée, and he hadn't forgotten it. That was why he wanted her now, but he wanted her to come willingly. That would be his triumph.

"Poor trusting fools," she murmured.

"Who?"

"The people sitting in London, planning, and not knowing that three days later you'd know all their plans."

"Why bother your pretty head about a lot of decadent fools?"

"Curiosity. Were they going to blow up a bridge or assassinate someone?"

"Neither." He turned her head toward him, tilting it back.

"Ah, Captain—" It seemed that the suave, cool voice spoke at the same moment that the door opened. Captain Ritter stood in the entrance, flicking ash from the cigarette in the long holder without which no one had ever seen him. The dapper little captain's face had a look of faint amusement. "Very convenient to find the Fräulein here."

Brundt was annoyed. His swarthy face was swollen with anger, the thick muscles of his neck bulging against the collar of his tunic. With an effort he controlled himself and said, "You wanted me?"

"I thought this would interest you." Captain Ritter handed a decoded message to him. He read it once and a look of incredulity stole across his face. He read it again and the incredulity gave way to rage. "Surely you are not surprised?" asked Ritter, watching him with amusement. "You always said you suspected the Fräulein."

(End of Part II)

A HEEL IN THE MOON

By H. BEDFORD-JONES

JOB PEARSE, just back from a two-day hunt, leaned on his long Lancaster rifle, shoved back his heavy coonskin cap, loosened his feet in the snowshoe thongs and stood drinking in all the details of the scene. His rough-bearded, high-boned features were convulsed with anger, but were vigilant withal.

"Cleaned me out, the dirty devils! And took Betsy's pouch, too. They'll pay for it!"

His winter quarters, a roomy wigwam of overlapped hides on converging poles, Indian fashion, had been well hidden here among the trees which broke the blizzards of the Illinois country. The hides had been



ILLUSTRATED
BY
NICK EGGENHOFER

slit to ribbons, the lodge plundered. The trail in the snow was plain to read: two men. But his angry gaze probed other indications left in the snow.

"They came heavy-loaded, went away heavier," he muttered. "Rested their guns agin' the lodge while inside; muskets, by the broad marks, not rifles. Took my whole pack o' prime fur, grub and spare powder, and Betsy's pouch. Left my blankets—why? Didn't need 'em. Thieving rats! Took them prime pelts I was counting to marry Betsy on, come spring; and took the pouch she give me, made with her own hands. . . ."

He was a hard, determined, stubborn man, was Job Pearse. More than peril of starvation or death, more than material losses, bulked the loss of this thing he prized above all. This pouch to hold his

fixings, flints and tinder and firebag, had cost Betsy a whole summer's work. Made of soft doeskin with a belt to go over the shoulder, it was embroidered with flowers and worked with his initials. Its sentimental value was, to him, enormous; it was his proudest possession, after his Lancaster rifle.

He looked again at the snow-signs. What snowshoes! The marks were clear; broad, crudely fashioned, heavily thonged with deerskin that stretched. Wretched things and to judge by the tracks, not worn by experts. Someone from the St. Louis country, perhaps, from across the Mississippi. Pearse glanced down at his own trim Ottawa bows, bought at Vincennes, and grunted. Then he went into the lodge and rooted around fruitlessly. bundled his blankets into a roll for his shoulders, and smoked a brief pipe of bitter reflection. That pouch! The sense of loss grew upon him; resolve to repair it hardened him, blinded him to peril.



It was over in a second and Pearse knew his ball had not missed—nor had the assassin's.

He had taken long chances wintering in this Illinois country, with no whites and only roving Indians about; it belonged to no settled tribe. The risk had promised rich payment. Now, with furs gone, powder gone—except the little in his horn—and no grub, he was in desperate straits for very life itself. Yet, with every instant, his ire rose at thought of the stolen pouch.

His calculations were vague; the country was little known. To the northeast lay the British fort at St. Joseph, over two hundred miles away. Vincennes, almost due east, was yet farther. St. Louis, to the west, was probably farther still. There were no other points of civilization. In extremity, he might find assistance from some Indian village—a doubtful prospect. More likely he would lose his scalp. Anyhow, Indians were scarce hereabouts.

"Vincennes is too far to make empty-handed," he reflected. "At St. Jo, the Britishers would collar me, bein' a war on. Better bet is the Spanish at St. Louis since they've took over all Louisiana. Huh! Best bet still, foller them thieves and get back my own and to boot. I'll have Betsey's pouch back or bust!"



IN this late January of 1781, affairs were complicated for a lone American trapper on his uppers. The Spanish at St. Louis claimed all this country. The Indians were allies of England, not of the fighting Colonies, and would be quick to take any chance scalp. Job Pearse saw that his promising hunt was ended—or maybe just begun. Not only his savage anger, but good sense as well, prompted him to take out after the thieves and get back his own. Without powder, food or spare flints, he was a lost man.

He took for granted they were just ordinary wandering redskins or maybe white hunters.

The trail was, he figured, some ten hours old; following it would be risky business at best, even for a trained woodsman. But, blankets rolled firm and tied across his shoulders he pulled his belt tight and set forth with long, rapid strides that ate up the miles.

He was astonished to find that the trail led him northwest, toward the Illinois River a score of miles distant.

Toward evening he had a stroke of luck, knocking a wild turkey out of a tree. He halted long enough to make a fire and feed full and then, under a high white moon, he kept plugging away. Even by moonlight one could easily follow this heavy-laden trail. Necessity drove him hard. Until the moon sank he maintained a furious pace, then rolled up in his blanket and slept until dawn.

He was up and on his way again with the first sun. Presently he found where the two thieves had camped for the night. They were only a few hours ahead of him now. He eyed the scene with wary appraisal. Clumsy snowshoes, clumsy trail. The camp "sign" corrected him: Only one was clumsy. One wore boots, the other moccasins; one was white, the other Indian or 'breed. Boots! That was queer. Who the devil would be wearing boots?

As though in answer to his thought, a slashed birch near the fire-marks drew his eye. Letters had been cut in the soft bark with a knife-point: *Viva España! Yo, El Rey, Juan Roca*. So, then—a Spaniard with boots!

He could picture the scene. Juan Roca, full-fed, alone here with one companion, scrawling like a boy, "I, The King!" That was the signature of Spanish kings. A fine fellow, Juan, imagining himself king of the wilderness . . .

Job Pearse snarled, looked to his rifle's priming and went on, warily. With noon, he picked up the line of trees that marked the river. It was bitter January weather, but clear. Pearse was bitter too, and hungry. When birds flapped up heavily ahead, he scouted cautiously and came upon an amazing scene.

A camp—but what a camp! The "sign" left here was astounding. The trail of his two thieves merged into a trail of others going up the river. They had camped here for the night and had cut up a dozen or more deer, probably brought in by parties of hunters or dropped during the march, for tracks of sled-runners showed on the river ice.

From the butchering-place he collected enough odds and ends to appease his own fierce hunger; and over his tiny fire he took stock. Two separate camps here: one of whites, one of Indians. A hundred or more men must have passed this way. Whither

bound? That was the mystery. Where from? Possibly St. Louis, yet this must be another mystery. In this wilderness, a hundred men was an army.

At any rate, he had chanced on something staggering. The two thieves were part of this array, two of the many hunters. The main band was heading up the frozen river; with so many men sweeping the country, he would find no game in their trail.

Snowshoes tied to his bundle, ready rifle over his arm, he struck out on the wind-swept ice; strips of deerskin bound around his moccasins gave secure footing. He was furious, now, as well as vengeful. He knew little of the geography up-river; only Indians would know of it, for there were no posts anywhere here.

Hour after hour the trail led on. They were traveling hard and fast. He traveled faster, yet only empty desolation lay ahead. Late that afternoon a small doe leaped from a thicket and started across the ice. He halted, aimed, and sped the bullet. He delayed to cut up his kill, ate his fill, and went on with the spare meat added to his load. Twice he heard distant shots; he was drawing close. An hour after dark, he glimpsed a glimmer of firelight ahead. He had caught up.

Satisfied, he took cover for the night, and with dawn moved forward cautiously. Early as he was, they were already on the march. He came into the deserted camp, where fires still smoked and waterholes in the ice were still unfrozen. He stopped there to eat again, and then pressed on, but even more warily than before. Warily, and savagely. He meant to have Betsy's pouch back if he had to follow this trail forever; but he also meant to keep his hair.

The sun rose higher. Noon was an hour away. Heavy thickets fringed the river. He was more and more astonished by so many men following this icy road to nowhere. He knew vaguely that the Sac and Fox country lay up north, but a large portion of this band was obviously white men. And Spaniards—who ever heard of Spaniard hunters?

The cold air quivered to a slight metallic click; a gun-hammer brought to cock. The sound pierced him like a knife. There was a movement in the thicket, close on his left. A spurt of smoke, the roar of a mus-

ket; a jarring, splintering crash as though his breastbone were riven asunder. But not even the shock of it spoiled his instant reaction. The long rifle roared response. It was all over and done with in a split second, and Pearse knew his ball had not missed. Nor had the assassin's bullet missed.

"Well, by gosh, I'm done for," he thought. Looking down, he groped for his powderhorn; his fingers closed on splintered shards. His jaw dropped. That murderous ball had struck the horn, driving it into his ribs, shattering the tough fibres and then had glanced away. He was not even hurt, except for the blow.

"That's what comes of scrapin' the horn too danged thin," he thought. "If I'd left it thicker, it wouldn't have busted. All my powder gone—hello!"

He darted forward at the thicket, hand on tomahawk. A heavy shape had fallen forward into the clear—a man, muffled in furs, an Indian who still clutched his discharged musket. Pearse's ball had taken him through the body. Like a dying animal, he lay glaring hatred, trying to rise. His face was painted white and red.

The tomahawk split his skull. Grunting, Pearse retrieved it; swift death was the most merciful. His quick eye caught a movement in the thicket. He plunged straight at it. A musket roared almost in his face, but the bullet went wild; weak hands had been unable to handle the gun. Through the smoke Pearse glimpsed a face, a figure, and checked his own blow. He looked again. A white face, a white man was sitting there calmly, watching him.

"*Eh, bien!* Kill me, then," said the man in French.



A GLANCE around; there were no others. Empty rifle in one hand, tomahawk in the other, Pearse looked down at the man. He sat beside a long, light sledge with hardwood runners and long traces. His features were thinned, his eyes bright with fever. A sick man. Job Pearse relaxed.

"You had your shot; I'll take mine later," he said. The febrile eyes widened.

"So you are English, as we thought!" he said.

"Nope. American. Took me for a Britisher, did you?"

"Who ever heard of Americans in this country?" said the man in slow but careful English. "This country belongs to Spain!"

"Glad ye think so." Pearse began to comprehend. A sick man, left behind with an Indian to follow the column. The sled was well loaded and packed. "Where ye from?"

"St. Louis. I am Gonsalvo de Funes. Two years I was a prisoner among the English. Kill me; I cannot stop you. I am weak with fever."

Pearse kicked the fallen musket aside, then went back to the dead Indian and turned him over. A Sac or Fox by his moccasins; hard to say which. But he had what Pearse wanted most. Carefully lifting away the powder-horn, Pearse eyed it delightedly. It was a large black horn, beautifully carved and hung from a two-inch-wide leather strip covered with quilled and beaded work. And it was full.

Then and there, Pearse reloaded his rifle, crammed in patch and bullet, took the Indian's firebag, and came back to where Funes sat watching him. He squatted down and looked at the man, and filled his pipe with the last of his tobacco.

"Spanish, are ye? Tell me about it. That Injun got his needin's for trying to murder me. You don't know no better, seems like."

No longer tensed to await death, the Spaniard warmed.

"I am of the thirty soldiers of Spain. There are thirty-five French militia, and sixty Indians, guides and hunters and fighters. Eugenio Pourré is the *capitán*. Don Francisco Cruzat, the governor, sent us to conquer the English country and teach them to keep out of Spanish territory."

Pearse, working to get a light, looked his astonishment.

"From St. Louis, are ye? But where bound? Ain't aiming to conquer Canada?"

"No, no. The English fort at St. Joseph. All this is our territory."

"My gosh! You marching from St. Louis clear to St. Joseph in dead o' winter—why, it's more'n six hundred mile! Injun guides, eh?"

Funes leaned over and traced with a finger in the snow.

"Look. This is the Illinois river. From it runs another, some name like Kankakee," he said. "This goes almost to St. Joseph itself. The rivers are frozen, they make a road for us. Already we have come more than half the distance, the hardest part."

To think of the Spaniards having this much pluck and gumption! Pearse marveled. Now Funes talked along volubly in his labored English. Americans and Spaniards were allies; they both fought the English. That Indian had taken Pearse for an English hunter, a most regrettable mistake.

"Yeah," assented Job Pearse. "Would have cost him his hair if I was that kind, but I ain't much on lifting scalps. Still, it was a mistake, for him."

Funes talked of himself. He was recovering from fever and was very weak. He had been left to follow slowly; the Indian had remained to draw the sled on the ice until Funes was strong enough to keep his feet. At present, he soon tired. On the sled were packed plenty of provisions, all kinds.

Job Pearse smoked thoughtfully. Left alone here, this man, unused to the wilderness, must perish miserably. Any passing redskin, friend or foe, would knife him. The dead Indian would have done so, except for the possibility of greater loot ahead at St. Joseph.

"You know one of the men in your company named Roca?" he asked. "Juan Roca?"

"*Madre de Dios!* You know him?" cried Funes. "Of course. He is a dead shot, a fine hunter! He can use snowshoes like those you carry; few of us have learned the trick."

"I don't know him, but I mean to," replied Pearse. "Now see here, friend—I'll make a bargain with you, since your party ain't enemies but ought to be friends with me . . ."

He described how Roca and another hunter had looted his winter quarters, and told about the lost pouch and what it meant to him. The Spaniard listened with sympathy.

"I'll help you on your way," Pearse concluded. "Won't be much of a trick to hitch this sled along. You'll be company and I'll have grub in plenty. When we catch

up with your party, then you point out this Juan Roca to me and I'll do the rest."

"No need, no need of that at all!" cried Funes. "The *capitán* will restore your property. He is a hard man, but a just man. He will not allow friendly Americans to be plundered. True, you have killed one of our friendly redskins, but that was his own fault."

"It shorely was," agreed Job Pearse. "You got tobacco on that sled? Then let's us be on our way."

The long traces about his sinewy shoulders, his duffle riding with the sick man, his long rifle over arm, Job Pearse headed northward once more and the sled came hitching along behind. He chuckled to himself.

"Me in harness! That's not something to brag about, but it's a good swap."

So it was, and a shrewd one to boot. He had plenty of grub and powder. No longer need he fear the rovers ahead, Funes being a hostage for his own safety. He could not well have hoped to fight an army to get back Betsy's pouch; but now this would not be necessary. Funes would make all clear when they caught up—if they did.

For the men ahead were marching hard and fast to reach their destination before any talking smokes carried the alarm on in advance.



THE sled was no particular burden. It did slow him down a lot, as he realized before the day came to sunset, but he cared little. He was no longer in dire haste, since Juan Roca could not now escape him. To have a companion was pleasant, after the lonely winter months. He liked Funes, though not enough to trust the man with a loaded musket.

Tea and flour and tobacco and talk—the evening meal was sumptuous. No longer was Job Pearse anxious to continue at breakneck speed through the night; now he was content to sleep out the dark hours.

Funes talked much. He made clear why Don Francisco had sent the army. In Spanish eyes, all the country west of the Alleghenies belonged to Louisiana and to them. The Colonies were winning their war for freedom; therefore the capture of

St. Joseph would serve to establish Spanish rights when peace negotiations began. Job Pearse, who had his own notions about the rights of Spain, listened and made no comment.

"I've got no war with Spain, but I shorely have one with Juan Roca!" he reflected.

All this, while lessening his own peril, hardened his resolve to get back his own.

Day after day he pushed on. From time to time Funes went afoot to lighten the burden, but soon tired. Pearse kept doggedly at it, unworried by his inability to overtake the column; what with his lost furs and other damage, he would have a goodly claim against the Spaniards, and one to be pressed home.

They came to the junction with the Kankakee, only a matter of hours behind the column, whose water-holes served them with scant trouble of breaking ice, and turned eastward and again northeast. They encountered no one; *Capitán* Pourré's men lagged not. A hard man to serve, said Funes, but just; surely justice would be done the American hunter.

"Better be," said Job Pearse.

The wide river had lessened and narrowed. Pearse had no earthly notion of where he was, nor cared; the trail could not be missed. On less wind-bared reaches of the narrowing ice, snow lay deeply banked. Through this the Spaniards had pressed, leaving a wide broken way for Pearse. The delay helped him to catch up, and a good thing because the grub was now rapidly running out.

There came a morning when, with Funes marching beside him, they sighted the cooking-fires of the column, and came upon them still burning. They might have overtaken the column that day, but about noon Funes went to pieces and had to take to the sled, so they slowed.

The last of the dried meat and flour went that evening. The river had now drawn in to little more than a creek. According to the Indian guides, said Funes, there would be only a brief march from the headwaters to the fort; it had taken close to a month all told from the time they left St. Louis. Pearse's respect for the *capitán* grew; he knew what hell that march must have been before the Illinois River was reached.

At dawn they broke camp and, with

Funes afoot, made good time. The Spanish fires were extinguished; this was now perilous country. But an hour later, black dots came into sight ahead; they had caught up. They, too, had been noted against the white expanse; a dozen men, whites and Indians, waited for them, hailed them, and Funes made response. The meeting was a joyous one. No sign of Roca here, said Funes.

Pearse eyed them: bronzed, haggard, bearded forms, war-painted redskins. The talk, in French and Spanish, went too fast for him to follow, but he was given hearty welcome on the say-so of Funes, and all hurried on once more. He was relieved of his burden now, and glad of it. With noon, they came up with the column.

Here, for the first time, Job Pearse recollected what a blasted fool he was, when one and then others of the Indians pointed at him and yells went up. A fierce clamor arose. That powder-horn, of course. It was a most notable horn and it marked him out instantly as the slayer of the redskin who had accompanied Funes. The whites closed around him and they all swept upon the short but brawny *capitán* who stood with two other officers and an Indian chief.

The tumult was terrific. French, Spanish, Indians, all shouted at once, Funes jabbered away, and Job Pearse stood leaning on his rifle and waiting. A short fellow, this *Capitán Pourré*, short and splay-bearded, hard of eye, full of pride and dignity. Suddenly a gasp broke from Pearse; he stirred, he stalked forward, anger quickening in him. For there was Betsy's pouch—there, adorning the *capitán* himself!

Pourré addressed him in broken English. Pearse broke in hotly, pointing to the pouch.

"Hand it back, Frenchy! That's my property—that and more. Where's Juan Roca?"

Juan Roca pushed forward, grinning. Those redskin yells for vengeance, however, had driven sense into Job Pearse, and he got himself in hand. The *capitán*, although chafing furiously at the delay, held an immediate council on the spot.

He heard Pearse to the full. He heard Funes. He heard the swaggering Roca and certain of the Indians. The entire

story of the stolen powder-horn came out.

"Naturally," he said to Pearse, "there is no question of your losses, since I myself am wearing this pouch that was yours—"

"Was?" bellowed Pearse. "Is, you mean! Not to mention them prime furs!"

"Now in our keeping," said the *capitán*. He directed sharp words at the Indians, and an interpreter repeated them. The redskins fell sullen, watching Pearse with eyes of hate. "You were attacked; you did well," he went on. "The Indian, a man of note among our allies, was to blame for his own fate. You acted most chivalrously toward our dear comrade, the *caballero* Don Gonsalvo de Funes, and I thank you in the name of Spain for your chivalry."

"Chivalry, hell!" said Pearse. "I want that pouch back, d'ye hear? I want that Roca and his thiev' pardner punished! I want my furs!"

"Ah, no," said the *capitán*, trying to twist his ragged mustachios into some shape. "You are an American, hunting without license in the territory of Spain. Your furs and goods are confiscated to Spain, señor. Your rifle you shall hand over to Don Gonsalvo, to replace the musket he no longer carries."

"I'll see you damned first!" bawled Pearse hotly. The *capitán* smiled.

"Very well. Shall we march on and leave you with your rifle, señor? Choose quickly."

Pearse gulped an oath. They had him nipped. The Spaniards were all a-grin, friendly enough but enjoying the justice of their *capitán*. Leave him behind? With half a hundred painted redskins eager for his scalp? It was high time to swallow pride.

"All right, cap," he growled. "You got me. I'll do what you say."

"Worthy *caballero*, I salute your wisdom!" said *Capitán Pourré*, with a flash of white teeth through his flaring beard. "We are allies against the English. You shall join us and complete the march with us, and help to humble the enemy! Among us you are safe; our worthy and valiant Indios shall not harm you, upon the word of a *caballero*. No blame is yours for the warrior you killed. You shall go back with us to St. Louis, and there you may place your claim and appeal my finding to the



*As dawn grayed in the eastern sky, the marching men
neared the dark mass of the fort.*

most valiant Señor Don Francisco Cruzat, commandant at St. Louis."



JOB PEARSE damned the powder-horn he carried, damned his own folly in wearing it, and choked down his anger. The Frenchmen, trappers and hunters, and the Spaniards, soldiers and militia, were friendly enough; many of them had never seen an American. He handed his rifle to Funes, who received it with a wink, and he became one of the expedition.

"And now, *caballeros*," announced the *capitán*, "the guides tell us we are nearly at the end of our journey. There is a short portage to the St. Joseph River tomorrow, and we go down that river to the English fort. So we will now march in military formation, Indians and scouts in advance, soldiers and sledges following."

Pearse had to acknowledge that the *capitán* made himself obeyed.

There were a dozen sleds, each drawn by a number of men. Funes got aboard one of these for the rest of the day. Pearse, surrounded by his new friends, received warnings in plenty against redskin vengeance, and found himself under constant watch for his own benefit. Gradually his surly acceptance of the situation passed, but not into good-natured acquiescence by any means.

Stubborn Job Pearse was not minded to see Betsy's pouch, his pride and joy, worn back to St. Louis by the strutting *capitán*. His shrewd, hard common-sense came to life, and he kept his ears open to the talk around him. The safest place for him was right here with the column, and he had no objection to taking a hand in the assault on the English fort. But Betsy's

precious pouch was coming back to him, one way or another.

During the night's halt and the next day's march, and the next, he gradually acquired a new understanding of the purposes of this march. The intent was to surprise the fort and take the garrison back to St. Louis as prisoners, in repayment for a British assault on St. Louis the previous summer. There was more than Spanish grandiloquence at issue, however. Rumors were rife of vast amounts of money to be won at the fort, besides great loot in peltries.

On the frontier, coin was almost unknown, though Continental scrip was no rarity. Seldom had Job Pearse seen actual money, but the British were said to have a good store of it at St. Joseph, having lately come to using cash among their Indian allies.

"A fistful of that money, large or small, would get me more at Vincennes than all my pelts," Pearse reflected as he marched. He still carried the ornate powder-horn, now in defiance of the redskins.

"These red devils are after rum and plunder and scalps," he told himself. "These Spanish and Frenchies are after furs and English goods. The *capitán's* after glory. Glory be damned! If we catch these Britishers off-guard and take the fort, the very next half-hour will see the biggest scrimmage for plunder ever was. Right then, afore things quiet down, is the time for me to sink my teeth in. So lay low, *caballero*, and don't shoot till you hear the geese honk!"

Being compelled to patience, Job Pearse took it to his bosom. He could be a very Indian for patience, when it was absolutely necessary.

Those last days held bitter toil; six-hour marches with two-hour halts, day and night, cold vittles to munch on and brandy when required. No man fell out. They were tough, those soldiers and settlers, hardy of heart. A final terrific march through deep snow took them to the St. Joseph River. At sunset, scouts came in with word: all clear ahead, no alarm, and a mere twelve miles to go.

The *capitán* ordered camp and rest, with march at midnight and the blow at dawn—a swift, hard blow for victory. There were too many Indians in these parts to venture any delay. All hands dropped like dogs, ate what was offered, and curled up. Funes and three of his friends slept close about Job Pearse, as usual, lest some lurking Indian slip a knife into him. This made Pearse grin to himself. Any redskin who caught *him* napping would be doing something, sure enough!

At midnight or a little after, they were up and off. In the darkness, Funes came up alongside and shoved the rifle at Pearse with a muttered word.

"You take it. Too long and heavy for me. Also, I am to carry the banner of Spain at the assault; until now it has been kept well wrapped."

"Thanks, *amigo*," grunted Pearse, jubilant. With the familiar long rifle in his hand, he was himself once more. A good omen!

The column headed down the frozen St. Joseph with no sound except the scraping of sled-runners and the *sluff-sluff* of feet on ice. The Spaniards kept to ranks, the militia following them; the Indians were out as scouts.

Now they came to an hour's halt in the darkness, and a stiff dram of brandy was handed around. Men were told off to rush the gates, others to mount the walls. The *capitán* and his two sergeants and the flag of Spain would receive formal surrender; there was to be no killing unless the English showed fight. Prisoners and plunder and glory—that was the plan. Job Pearse listened and spat in grim disgust. It was not his notion of war; but it was not his war, either. The *capitán* seemed to have forgotten all about him now, and he was glad of it.

The sledges and packs were left here in

a cache among the trees. Pearse left his blanket-roll and snowshoes, but not with the other duffle. Cunningly, he placed them a trifle apart, close to the shore, easy of access, and with them a little store of grub. He grinned to himself as he fell in with the other men. Once back here, with roll and snowshoes—let Frenchy or redskin catch him if they could, and a heel in the moon!

It did not occur to him that others, more deadly intent on vengeance, might also be planning to act in the moment of victory.



DAWN grayed the eastern sky. The marching men approached the river's sharp elbow where the trading-post stood. There on the higher ground was the dark mass of the fort, cabins and Indian quarters clumped outside. The column split up, designated parties moving off to attack the post from the other sides. Gray grew the skies and snow. Funes, who had saved up his strength, stood beside the *capitán*, the gaudy flag of Spain attached to a pole. The smoke of morning fires rose from the fort. Men came and went at the open gates, bringing in wood from the long winter's pile stacked under the stockaded wall.

"*Viva España*!" cried the *capitán*. "Forward!"

With his little group under the flag, he headed straight for the gates. He was after dramatic effect, and got it. There was no ferocity in these Spanish hearts; they wanted results, not blood. A trumpet, carefully packed along six hundred miles of trail, blew out its clarion message. The soldiers deployed. The fort leaped into yelling alarm.

A musket exploded—the signal. Everyone blazed away. From the other sides of the fort came more musketry. Indian war-whoops shrilled on the morning. Parties of men pounded for the bastions, for the gates. "*España! España!*" lifted the shouts.

Wild panic was upon the fort. Men scurried about. A few wild shots rang out in feeble answer. Straight upon the gates marched the *capitán*. He sent no flag of truce; he shouted in his broken English for surrender. The attackers were at the loop-

holes, at the gates, on the outer walls. A scrimmage here, another there, and yells for mercy shrilled up. Caught totally unprepared, the English were helpless. In marched the *capitán*, and the fort was his. The assailants flooded in.

Well had Job Pearse foreseen the wild confusion. He legged it with the rest and was inside among the first of them, but wasted no time in exultant yells. He didn't pause to watch the surrender, the Spanish flag fluttering up the pole, the groups of English being disarmed. Even before the hunters and Indians scattered to loot, he was darting past the bewildered group of English officers into the headquarters building whence they issued. Close behind him flitted two dark shapes, but he was not aware of them.

A bald-headed Englishman, half dressed, was frantically working at a rude desk when Pearse rushed in upon him. The long rifle-iron smacked his bald head and sent him tumbling into a corner. Putting down the rifle, Pearse grabbed hurriedly. Money, hard money, in gold and silver, was there in full sight.

Into the breast pockets of his shirt he began to fumble the coins. Suddenly his nose told him what his eyes did not; he detected the Indian smell behind him. He darted a glance— What the devil! Two of them almost on him—two of the Sac warriors, knives out, yells ringing as they leaped.

Pearse dropped like a flash; nothing else could have saved him. He dropped and twisted as he fell, and they tumbled in upon him. A knife slashed his cheek and neck. His long arms gripped them; the three figures writhed and knotted in a tangle. Then he got a hand free and had his knife out, and stabbed repeatedly. A wild death-yell shrilled up from the limp form on the floor.

No quarter here. Pearse found his feet, shot erect, and was grappled by a lithe shape. Luckily he caught the knife wrist. One dead, one alive and fighting like a catamount—grappling, stabbing, biting—painted features contorted in primitive ferocity.

Each held off the other's keen blade. Pearse, blood running down his cheek, desperately summoned up his last full strength. They thrashed about, reeled, to-

gether fell headlong across the desk. Pearse lost his grip, felt the redskin's knife gash across his ribs. He struck the painted face aside with furious rage, felt his own knife dashed from his hand in the fall. Then, somehow, he got the red knife-wrist in one hand, the red scrawny throat in the other.

They tumbled to the floor, locked together. Job Pearse put his whole frenzied self into his ten fingers and hung on. The Sac's loose hand beat at him, clawed at him, twined in his long hair and yanked at it fiercely, but he hung on. The yanking fingers became spasmodic, the writhing body under his grip relaxed. He still hung on. And he was hanging on when the voice of the *capitán* sounded in the next room.

This wakened him. With an effort, he unlocked his stiffened fingers and scrambled upright. He dabbed at his bleeding cheek, smearing the blood over his face. The gash over his ribs had slit his hunting shirt and the skin beneath, but it was not deep. He gulped air into his lungs. His moment was passing, passing swiftly—his one chance! He might have had his fill of the hard money scattered carelessly across the desk, but his mind was not on that.

The *capitán* was giving orders, men were running. Now or never! Swift as a striking snake, Pearse retrieved his knife, sheathed it, and with his left hand caught up as many of the coins as he could grasp. Then he strode into the entry-room beyond.

There was the *capitán*, alone. Outside in the fort enclosure women were screeching and prisoners were being herded into small groups. Pearse thrust out his moneyed fist.

"*Capitán!* Look at this!" Pearse yelled exultantly.

The Spaniard turned, glimpsed the gold and silver coins, and caught at them. Pearse swung his right fist smack into the ragged splay beard with full weight. The blow knocked the *capitán* off his feet and Pearse jumped on him, not too gently. With swift hands he stripped off the embroidered pouch; it felt unusually fat and crowded.

"Now, durn you, holler your fat head off!" he grunted as he leaped up.

He slipped the pouch-loop over his head, darted back for his rifle, and came back to find the *capitán* rising with a lusty bawl on his lips. Pearse kicked him in the proper spot, sent him sprawling on his hands again, and was out of the doorway with a leap.

He threaded his way across the densely thronged enclosure. No one noticed him. He was out of the gates and heading swiftly down the trail for the river, when he heard the shouting tumult sweep up behind him.

A musket banged, then others—not many, for none of the attackers had paused to reload. Pearse glanced back over his shoulder, redoubled his pace, and caught the *clink-clink* of the coins in his shirt pockets. He patted the fat pouch lovingly, adjusted it around to his hip, and fled like a deer.

Once on the river he slowed for more careful footing, heard the uplift of whoops behind him and grunted his scorn. He kept a sharp eye out for the cache they had left behind. An hour passed as he sped on, and finally, with fire in his lungs, he sighted the spot. He located his blanket-roll, snowshoes and grub, snatched them up and scurried across to the south bank of the frozen river.

Here, among the trees, he slipped his moccasins into the snowshoes, got his pack

in place, primed his unfired rifle anew, then paused for brief rest. His hand went to the fat pouch on his hip, and he hauled it around.

"Better see what loot the *capitán* got for himself, then I'd best be moving on," he muttered.

He opened the pouch and saw something scarlet. He plucked at it. His jaw fell when he saw what it was; then a laugh came to his lips as a huge British flag was revealed. The flag of the fort—the grandiose *capitán's* loot!

"Well, I'll be durned!" he said, and chuckled anew. He started to toss it away, then hastily caught it back and began to crowd it into the pouch again. "I swan! If it ain't the very thing to line a blanket with! Betsy will shorely be pleased to get this!"

He looked up. Rapidly moving black dots on the river-ice caught his eye. He thumbed his nose at them and squared away. "Come Frenchy, come Injun, come hell or high water—ain't nothing nor anybody going to stop Job Pearse this side o' Vincennes!"

He went swinging off among the trees and snowdrifts of the wide valley, and was lost to sight, horn swinging and pouch flapping jauntily.

Catch him if you can, *capitán*, and a heel in the moon!



(Continued from page 8)

argue with you, mister. The Boise claims six all by herself.

The *Helena* (Ah, there was a ship!)** wasn't exactly idle, nor was your destroyer. Trouble is in these night engagements, no one knows for certain who sank what. It's a sort of community slugfest; two or three American ships may be firing on a Jap when she goes down, and they all, quite naturally, put in a claim. Everybody is right, and so long as the Japs are sunk, everybody is happy.

Anyway, if you had any part in sending those Japs to the bottom, I wouldn't call you wrong if you claimed black was white.

All best wishes,

Cordially,

Hugh B. Cave

**Editor's note: Mr. Cave's enthusiasm is forgivable. He is hard at work on a book which will tell the complete story of the *Helena*—the ship which has been called, with justification, "the fightin'est ship in the Navy."

L T. M. A. SHUMARD III takes us back to dry land for a minute. The author of "Baby from Base Point" is on

active duty in the Field Artillery and was out of reach when we tried to get him to introduce himself personally at *Camp-Fire* on joining our Writers' Brigade for the first time. We were able to corral a few facts elsewhere, however. He's a Texan, went to the University of Texas, studied law and was a senior law student at St. Mary's University when he enlisted as a private in January '42. He was commissioned from OCS eight months later. He's worked on a ranch, in traditional Texas fashion, run a gas station, been tax assessor of Kendall Co., Tex., and sold insurance and real estate. We'll try to round up some more information to go with another story soon, we hope.

IN THIS department a couple of issues ago we printed a tribute in verse to the Infantryman by Dean Heffernan. Now Carl Bostelmann (he collaborated with Ed Diehl on that glider story, "Go Fly a Kite," you'll recall, sends us the following lines on the Marines, just in case—though we can't imagine it—any leather-neck has developed an inferiority

(Continued on page 158)

Why Man's Prayers Did Not Stop Hitler

Millions of people daily practice meditation, prayer, new thought and other spiritual exercises. For many years people of good will have been praying for the overthrow of Hitler, Hirohito and what they stand for. Why has the answer been so long delayed? Why do so many other prayers remain unanswered? Why does calamity often befall us in spite of our prayers?

Thirty years ago, in Forbidden Tibet, behind the highest mountains in the world, a young Englishman named Edwin J. Dingle found the answer to these questions. A great mystic opened his eyes. A great change came over him. He realized the strange Power that Knowledge gives.

That Power, he says, can transform the life of anyone. Questions, whatever they are, can be answered. The problems of health, death, poverty and wrong can be solved.

In his own case, he was brought back to splendid health. He acquired wealth, too, as well as world-wide professional recognition. Thirty years ago he was sick as a man could be and live. Once his coffin was bought. Years of almost continuous tropical fevers, broken bones, near blindness, privation and danger had made a human wreck of him, physically and mentally.

He was about to be sent back to England to die when a strange message came—"They are

waiting for you in Tibet." He wants to tell the whole world what he learned there, under the guidance of the greatest mystic he ever encountered during his 21 years in the Far East. He wants everyone to experience the greater health and the Power which there came to him.

Within 10 years he was able to retire to this country with a fortune. He had been honored by fellowships in the World's leading geographical societies for his work as a geographer. And today, 30 years later, he is still so athletic, capable of so much work, so young in appearance, it is hard to believe he has lived so long.

As a first step in their progress toward the Power that Knowledge gives, Mr. Dingle wants to send to readers of this notice a 9,000-word treatise. It is free. For your free copy, send your name and address to the Institute of Mentalphysics, 213 South Hobart Blvd., Dept. H-197, Los Angeles 4, Calif. Write promptly.





ASK ADVENTURE

Information you can't get elsewhere

THE PYTHON or the tiger?

Query:—A group of us were discussing a scene showing a tiger fighting with a big python from the latest Frank Buck picture, "Cavalcade." We want to know who would win in a fight-to-the-death struggle between the two animals. And if the snake won would it swallow the tiger, or if the tiger won would it eat the snake? Also could a python kill an elephant or a water buffalo?

—Peter A. Vellos
6116 Utica Ave.
Cleveland, Ohio

Reply by Clifford H. Pope:—Only the largest python would have the ghost of a chance with a big tiger but there is good evidence that tigers occasionally eat pythons. I know of no proof that an adult tiger has ever been defeated by a python and certainly a tiger is too big for any snake to swallow. Adult leopards are, however, killed and eaten by large pythons.

A python would have no way of killing an elephant and I do not believe it would ever tackle such a formidable animal as a water buffalo. The constricting powers of the big snakes have been grossly exaggerated.

OF SALAMANDERS, newts and toads.

Request:—A short time ago while hunting in the coastal region here in southern Washington, I happened to observe a salamander or a newt. (I don't know the fine points between the two) that interested me very much.

I will give as near as I can a description of this animal. It was approximately 8 inches long. The greater portion of its body was of a chocolate brown color, with a lighter stripe of tan running along its spine, from its shoulders to near the tip of its tail, and with stripes of the same lighter color that seemed to extend along the length of its ribs. This lighter portion was

slightly raised above the rest of the body. It seemed to have gills, at least it had gill openings and covers, although it was at least 150 feet from any water. But if you have ever been out here in the coastal region of the Pacific Northwest, you will know that a gill-equipped animal could almost breathe the air, there is so much rain and mist.

Now here is what puzzled me. When I attempted to turn the animal over to examine it, I noticed a white milky substance that was exuding from the lighter portion along its spine. This fluid seemed to be about the consistency of milkweed sap, and was coming from irregularly spaced openings along this lighter colored stripe. Most of it was coming from the hips back along its tail. It seemed to have a plentiful supply, as when I wiped it off there was immediately another batch of it forthcoming.

Naturally I did a little speculating as to the whys and wherefors of this, and I am going to hazard a couple of guesses as to the reasons for it.

1. It made the animal obnoxious to anything that might want to eat it.
2. It is the male method of distributing its reproductive germs.

I am probably wrong on both guesses, so give me the right answer. I am enclosing the self-addressed and stamped envelope as required in *Ask Adventure*.

—Cpl. John L. Stiles
Battery C, 18th Coast Artillery
Fort Columbia, Washington

Reply by Clifford H. Pope:— The salamander that you observed was probably the long-toed salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum*). Many amphibians have poison glands in the skin and especially those related to the species in question. Their poison is highly irritating to the mucous membrane but harmless to the ordinary skin. Mammals quickly learn to let the poisonous kinds go unharmed. A dog has been known to die in half an hour from the time it made the mistake of biting a marine toad.

Your observation is interesting because there is little or no information on the long-toed salamander available even in technical literature.

THE ASK ADVENTURE SERVICE is free, provided self-addressed envelope and **FULL POSTAGE** for reply are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries must enclose International Reply Coupons, which are exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.

Send each question *direct* to the expert in charge of the section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. **Do Not** send questions to the magazine. Be definite; explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question. The magazine does not assume any responsibility. **No Reply** will be made to requests for partners, financial backing or employment.

★(Enclose addressed envelope with International Reply Coupon.)

Notice: Many of our *Ask Adventure* experts are now engaged in government service of one kind or another. Some are on active duty in the Army or Navy, others serving in an executive or advisory capacity on various of the boards and offices which have been set up to hasten the nation's war effort. Almost without exception these men have consented to remain on our staff, carry on their work for the magazine if humanly possible, but with the understanding that for the duration such work is of secondary importance to their official duties. This is as it should be, so when you don't receive answers to queries as promptly as you have in the past, please be patient. And remember that foreign mails are slow and uncertain these days, many curtailed drastically. Bear with us and we'll continue to try to serve you as speedily as possible.

ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS

SPORTS AND HOBBIES

Archery—EARL B. POWELL, care of *Adventure*

Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, care of *Adventure*.

Basketball—STANLEY CARHART, 99 Broad St., Matawan, N. J.

Big Game Hunting in North America: Guides and equipment—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventure*.

Boxing—COL. JOHN V. GROMBACH, 1619 Mass Ave. N.W., Wash., D. C.

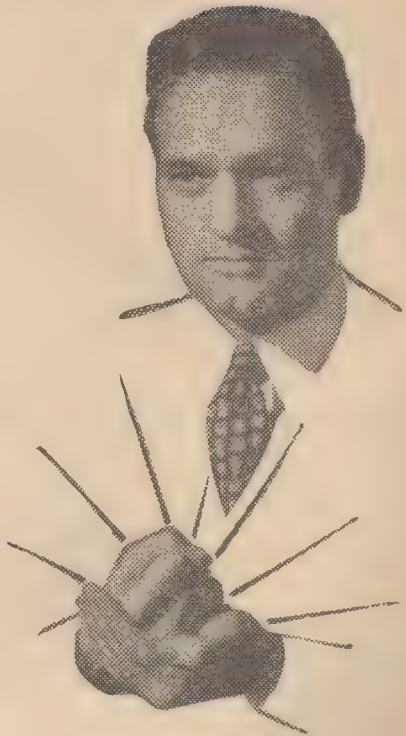
Camping—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Canoeing: Paddling, sailing, cruising, regattas—EDGAR S. PERKINS, 1325 So. Main St., Princeton, Ill.

Coins and Medals—WILLIAM L. CLARK, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th St., N. Y. C.

Dogs—FREEMAN LLOYD, care of *Adventure*.

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Fishing, Salt water: Bottom fishing, surf casting; trolling; equipment and locations—**C. BLACKBURN MILLER**, care of *Adventure*.

Fly and Bait Casting, Tournament—"CHIEF" **STANWOOD**, East Sullivan, Maine.

Globe-trotting and Vagabonding—**ROBERT SPIERS BENJAMIN**, care of *Adventure*.

Health-Building Activities, Hiking—**DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE**, care of *Adventure*.

Motor Boating—**GERALD T. WHITE**, Montville, N. J.

Motorecycling: Regulations, mechanics, racing—**CHARLES M. DODGE**, 432 Old Farm Rd., Wyncote, Penna.

Mountain Climbing—**THEODORE S. SOLOMONS**, 952 No. Hudson Ave., Hollywood, Calif.

Old Songs—**ROBERT WHITE**, 913 W. 7th St., Los Angeles, Calif.

Old-Time Sailing—**CHAS. H. HALL**, 446 Ocean Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: Foreign and American—**DONBOAN WIGGINS**, 170 Liberty Rd., Salem, Oregon.

Shotguns, American and Foreign; Wing Shooting and Field Trails—**ROY S. TINNEY**, care of *Adventure*.

Small Boating: Skiffs, outboard, small launch, river and lake cruising—**RAYMOND S. SPEARS**, Inglewood, Calif.

Swimming—**LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY**, 115 West 11th St., N. Y., N. Y.

Swords, Spears, Pole Arms and Armor—**CAPT. R. E. GARDNER**, care of *Adventure*.

Track—**JACKSON SCHOLZ**, R. D. No. 1, Doylestown, Pa.

Woodcraft—**PAUL M. FINK**, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—**MURL E. THRUSH**, New York Athletic Club, 59th St. and 7th Ave. N., N. Y.

Yachting—**A. R. KNAUER**, 6720 Jeffery Ave., Chicago, Ill.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: American, north of the Panama Canal, customs, dress, architecture; pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions—**ARTHUR WOODWARD**, Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Aviation: Airplanes, airships, airways and landing fields, contests, aero clubs, insurance, laws, licenses, operating data, schools, foreign activities, publications, parachutes, gliders—**MAJOR FALK HARMEL**, 709 Longfellow St., Washington, D. C.

Entomology: Insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects—**DR. S. W. FROST**, 465 E. Foster Ave., State College, Penna.

Forestry, North American: The U. S. Forestry Service, our national forests, conservation and use—**A. H. CARHART**, c/o *Adventure*.

Forestry, Tropical: Tropical forests and products—**WM. R. BARBOUR**, 1091 Springdale Rd., Atlanta, Ga.

Herpetology: Reptiles and amphibians—**CLIFFORD H. POPE**, care of *Adventure*.

Marine Architecture: *Ship modeling*—CHAS. H. HALL, 446 Ocean Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mining, Prospecting, and Precious Stones: *Anywhere in North America. Outfitting; any mineral, metallic or non-metallic*—VICTOR SHAW, care of Adventure.

Ornithology: *Birds; their habits and distribution*—DAVIS QUINN, 5 Minerva Pl., Bronx, N. Y.

Photography: *Outfitting, work in out-of-the-way places; general information*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, N. J.

Radio: *Telegraphy, telephony, history, receiver construction, portable sets*—DONALD McNICOL, care of Adventure.

Railroads: *In the United States, Mexico and Canada*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill.

Sawmilling:—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of Adventure.

Sunken Treasure: *Treasure ships; deep-sea diving; salvage operations and equipment*—LIEUTENANT HARRY E. RIESEBERG, care of Adventure.

Taxidermy:—EDWARD B. LANG, 156 Joralemon St., Belleville, N. J.

Wildcrafting and Trapping—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.

MILITARY, NAVAL AND POLICE

Federal Investigation Activities: *Secret Service, etc.*—FRANCIS H. BENT, care of Adventure.

The Merchant Marine:—GORDON MACALLISTER, care of Adventure.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police:—ALEC CAVADAS, King Edward High School, Vancouver, B. C.

State Police:—FRANCIS H. BENT, care of Adventure

U. S. Marine Corps:—MAJOR F. W. HOPKINS, care of Adventure.

U. S. Navy:—LIEUTENANT DURAND KIEFER, care of Adventure.

GEOGRAPHICAL SUBJECTS

Philippine Islands:—BUCK CONNER, Conner Field, Quartzsite, Ariz.

★**New Guinea:**—L. P. B. ARMIT, care of Adventure.

★**New Zealand, Cook Island, Samoa:**—TOM L. MILLS, 27 Bowen St., Felding, New Zealand.

★**Australia and Tasmania:**—ALAN FOLEY, 243 Elizabeth St., Sydney, Australia.

★**South Sea Islands:**—WILLIAM MCCREADIE, "Ingle Nook," 39 Cornelia St., Wiley Park, N. S. W., Australia.

Hawaii:—JOHN SNELL, Deputy Administrator, Defense Savings Staff, 1055 Bishop St., Honolulu, T. H.

Madagascar:—RALPH LINTON, Dept. of Anthropology, Columbia University, N. Y., N. Y.

Africa, Part 1 ★**Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Tunis, Algeria, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan**—CAPT. H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C. 2 ★**Abyssinia, Italian Somaliland, British Somali Coast Protectorate, Eritrea, Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya**—GORDON MACCREAGH, 2231 W. Harbor Drive, St. Petersburg, Florida. 3 **Tripoli, Sahara caravans**—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, care of Adventure. 4 **Bechuanaland, Southwest Africa, Angola, Belgian Congo, Egyptian Sudan and French West Africa**—MAJOR S. L. GLENISTER, care of Adventure. 5 ★**Cape Province, Orange Free State, Natal, Zululand, Transvaal, Rhodesia**—PETER FRANKLIN, Box 1491, Durban, Natal, So. Africa.



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South America, Part 1 Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile—EDGAR YOUNG, care of Adventure.

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Labrador—WILMOT T. DEBELL, care of Adventure.

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Alaska—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 952 No. Hudson Ave., Hollywood, Calif.

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Middle Western U. S., Part 2 Ohio River and Tributaries and Mississippi River—GEO. A. ZERR, Vine and Hill Sts., Crafton, P. O., Ingram, Penna. 3 Lower Mississippi from St. Louis down, Louisiana swamps, St. Francis, Arkansas Bottom—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.

Eastern U. S., Part 1 Maine—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Me. 2 Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I., Mass.—HOWARD R. VOIGHT, 40 Chapel St., Westmont, Conn. 3 Adirondacks, New York—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif. 4 New Jersey—F. H. BENT, 43 Elm Pl., Red Bank, N. J. 5 Ala., Tenn., Miss., N. C., S. C., Fla., Ga.—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of Adventure. 6 The Great Smokies and Appalachian Mountains south of Virginia—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to Lost Trails will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and for women are declined, as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or that may not seem suitable to the editors for any other reason. No charge is made for publication of notices.

Anyone knowing of the whereabouts of Thomas H. Dobbs, aged 71, 5 feet 9½, curly hair, blue eyes, was a prospector in Utah, Washington and Arizona, spent some time in Pocatello, Idaho, please communicate with his brother, John R. Dobbs, Morristown Post Office, Arizona.

Any oldtimer who can recall the name or the name and address of the pharmacist's mate who ran the sick bay at Main Barracks, Yerba Buena Naval Station, (Goat Island or Boat Hill to the gobs), during the Fall of 1918 will do a great favor by informing Bill Gianella, 1042 59th St., Oakland, 8, Calif.

Any information as to the whereabouts of Rochus Cofer of Smithfield, Va., last heard of eleven years ago, will be appreciated by his brother, John M. Cofer, 124 N. North Carolina Ave., Atlantic City, N. J.

William J. Smith, age 51 years, light blue eyes, dark brown hair, height 6 ft., last heard of in State of Washington. He was born in Montesano, Wash., and spent school days in Grants Pass, Ore. Anyone knowing his whereabouts please communicate with his brother-in-law, C. E. Baker, 968 Neilson St., Berkeley 6, Calif.

Albert R. Gately—the best pal I ever had—was last heard from in Missouri. I would like to locate him. Anyone knowing his whereabouts write Morton A. Richard, 1218 N. 24 St., Phoenix, Ariz.



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(Continued from page 151)

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For that eagle on his collar,
For that anchor and the earth,
He will show the cockeyed Axis
What Americans are worth!

He's applejack two hundred proof,
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He's Jim Thorpe in his biggest game,
He's Joe Doake from the Hall of Fame!
He's Buffalo Bill from Bunker Hill,
He's Davy Crockett at Fort Duquesne,
He's General George at Valley Forge—
Remember the Alamo and the Maine!
He's just a guy from Albuquerque,
New Orleans, Brooklyn, or Seattle,
But when he draws his bead in battle—
He's Dan'l Boone out huntin' turkey!

Roll out the barrel! Strike up the band!
And don't forget the girl he left behind!
He's got the situation well in hand—
But he's got Oklahoma on his mind!
While the Yankee eagle spreads its wings,
While the Yankee anchor plumbs the sea,
A kid named Joe from Quantico
Will set the whole earth free!
He's got a girl who wears a purple ribbon
... Far away ... Far away ...
Who's waiting for a Leatherneck
Who'll be coming back some day!

He's the *gung-ho* kid of Carlson's Raiders
On the jungle trail and the wreck-strewn
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The guerrilla who routs the Jap invaders,
He makes new tradition for The Corps!
He's Jack O'Leary, he's Barney Ross,
And in any battle he's the boss—
So call your shots and let it start:
"Semper Fidelis" is in his heart!
He's John Paul Jones on his *Bonhomme*,
He's Walter Johnson with a bomb
At Old Quebec, Chapultepec,
Hot from Cantigny-on-the-Somme
And Parris Island—and that means
He's one of Uncle Sam's Marines!

From the halls of Montezuma
To the shores of Tripoli—

Watch the mermaid on his biceps
And be warned by what you see!
He's the Leatherneck, this fellow
Who is color-blind to yellow—
He's the answer to our prayers,
He's the Yankee kid who swears
By the locket in his pocket
And the uniform he wears—
On his oath to the eagle
And the anchor and the earth
That he'll show the cockeyed world
What Americans are worth!

ADDISON B. FREEMAN of Philadelphia, Penn. writes—

It is with some trepidation that I question the accuracy of anything appearing in *Adventure*. I have been too long and too well acquainted with *Camp-Fire* not to know that, in more cases than not, the author is right. (Hear! Hear! Ed.)

I do wish, however, to invite your attention to page 126 of the January 1944 issue, "Where Nests the Watersnake."

Therein is described the murder of a man by the use of corrosive sublimate (Mercuric Chloride $Hg Cl_2$). The death is described as being almost instantaneous.

Death from this poison, no matter what the dosage, does not occur in the manner described. Although it is a deadly poison, hours and sometimes days elapse between the dose and death.

Culp would certainly have had time to use the derringer. Ainsley should have used cyanide of potassium or, better still, hydrocyanic acid, which is miscible in both water and alcohol.

No toxicologist or potential poisoner we, we promptly poured the lethal dose in Author Constiner's shot glass. Here's what he does for his headache—

Dear Mr. Freeman:

Adventure has just reached out from New York with a pair of fire tongs and dropped your incandescent letter in my lap.

When I wrote "Where Nests the Watersnake" I anticipated possible controversy from antiquarian readers and kept a bale of references in reserve for that purpose. And now a chemist mousetraps me!

I'm in no position to dispute you. The discussion, in public print, of the instantaneity of poisons is a sacred and traditional one and the champions of hydrocyanic acid and potassium certainly have the best case. However, I selected corrosive

(Continued on page 161)

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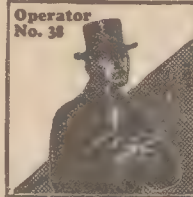
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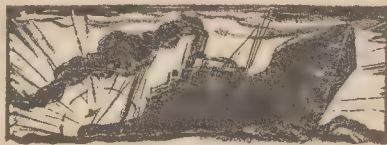
THE TRAIL AHEAD



FROM THE STEAMING JUNGLE TRAILS OF THE PHILIPPINES TO THE LAVA-CRUSTED SLOPES OF A VENEZUELAN VOLCANO AND HALF AROUND THE WORLD AGAIN. IT'S A LONG AND WINDING TRAIL WE BREAK NEXT MONTH WITH ADVENTURE AROUND EVERY TURN.



E. Hoffman Price in "Sign of Fire" returns with Jim Kane, Bishop Jackson, Datu Ryan and all four of his Moro wives, to carry on their amazing guerrilla campaign with *kris* and *kampilan* against the Jap invader in the first installment of a gripping two-part tale . . . Kenneth Perkins in "The Judgment of Quilada" takes us to the Orinoco to listen to the yodeling of the toucans in the rain forests and the dire predictions of a skull-faced Jeremiah who could smell disaster . . . F. R. Buckley in "Of Glamour and Gunpowder" brings back that swashbuckling soldier-of-fortune, Luigi Caradosso, to give an alchemist a dose of his own medicine and cure a young lord of lovesickness. . . .



Richard Howells Watkins gives us "The Spy-Gazers," another hilarious episode in the convoyed career of the Margie Blackenham. Cap'n Cobb and Mr. MacDuin furnish the laughs . . . Gordon MacCreagh, back at last from his African service, gives us a brilliant tale of the bush, "At Long Range" . . . Allan R. Bosworth steers us a thousand miles across the South Atlantic in an open boat . . . Harry R. Botsford lets us work at "The Most Dangerous Job in the World" in an amazing fact story . . . Plus the usual informative features and departments you can't find in any other magazine . . . And last but not least, the final payoff of the M. V. Heberden serial in which the characters below shuffle themselves into their proper niches and the identity of the "Traitor Unknown" becomes apparent in a smashing invasion-prelude climax.



?

Adventure
25c

On sale March 10th

(Continued from page 159)

sublimate for Mr. Ainsley because it's been the old reliable layman's poison since the time of the Borgias and checking its action in my Osler I learned that "vomiting and abdominal pain . . . and sometimes collapse follow promptly" on administration and that "there is much difference in the severity of the symptoms, largely due to the amount absorbed." As you point out, quite likely I was hasty in the death interval; but this I guarantee: While Culp may have had time to use his derringer—his heart wasn't in it, he was definitely preoccupied.

Believe me, it was good hearing from you. And don't think you won't pop up in my mind from now on, every time my typewriter is digesting a toxicological homicide!

Cordially,
Merle Constiner

What we want to know is if anything is genuinely instantaneous except a railroad torpedo under an upper plate!

JONATHAN FETTES, who also joins the ranks of our Writers' Brigade this month, is 48 years old, Scottish, son of a sea captain and was a captain himself in the Blue Funnel Line out of Glasgow. He was married abroad in '32 to an American girl, came to this country in '33. Has been writing for many years and has contributed to many magazines: *Liberty* in this country, *Chamber's Journal* and *Blackwood's* in England, are among them. He now is working as a civilian for the British Admiralty in Tacoma, Wash. Has two daughters and an airedale dog; has been a golfer for years and recently became an ardent fisherman.

AWORD to the wise: Waste paper is still an important war material—it's essential for packing ammunition. So in order to make sure that there's enough left over to go 'round for your favorite publication, don't forget to save all waste paper and turn it in for scrap or sell it to your junk-dealer.—K.S.W.



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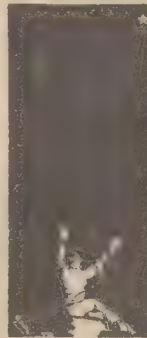
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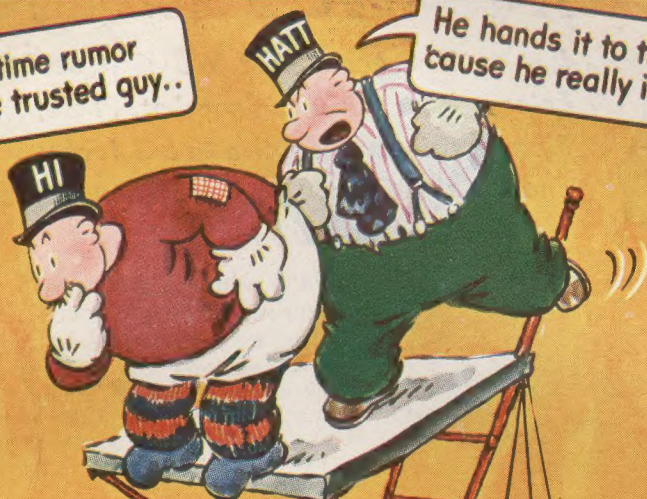
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City..... State

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an' you tell some trusted guy..

He hands it to the Axis,
cause he really is a spy!



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An' what we say goes double
if you know a guy "up top"! . . .
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is Silence, 'cause loose lips
Can sabotage what's planned on
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(Signed) MR. HI AND MR. HATT



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